

SPY

Superfabulous 50th-Issue
Keepsake Edition!

May 1991 Volume 5 Number 7

Life Really Is Like High School!

OUR IMAGINARY
YEARBOOK OF AMERICA'S
RICH AND FAMOUS

Excerpts from a New SPY Book

Übercop: LAPD's Daryl Gates Under Fire

Philip Johnson and the
Architecture Conspiracy



Madonna and
Norm Schwarzkopf
as SPY High's Really,
Really Popular Kids







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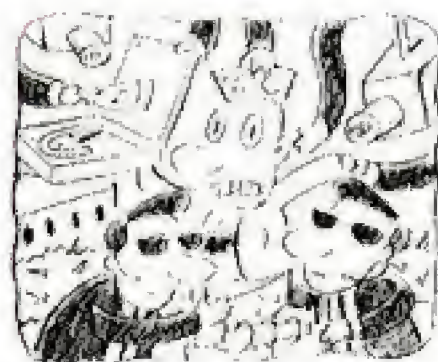
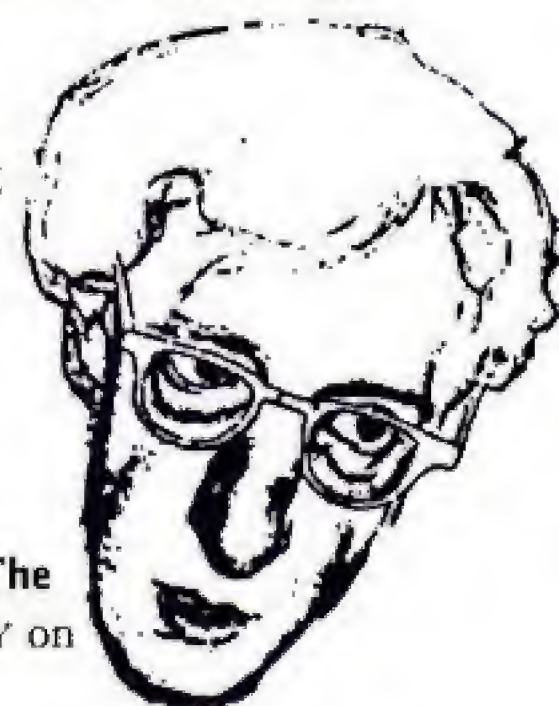
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This One



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Z. CAVARICCI

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Great Expectations

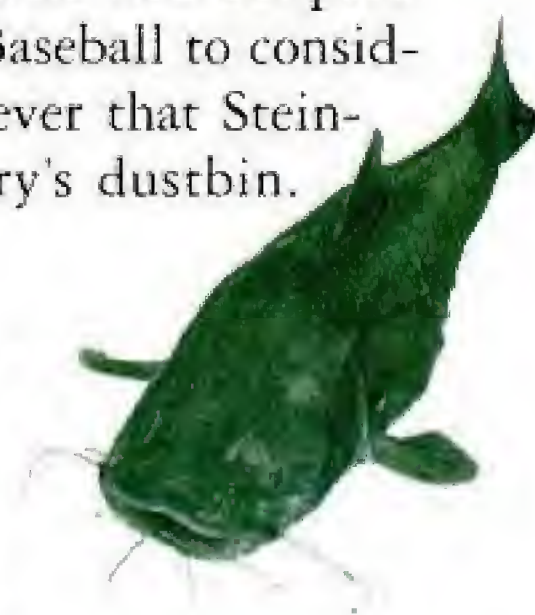
"The only word not in the original text of the play is the word 'fuck,' which I introduced for the present production."
—Harold Pinter, in a letter challenging a magazine review of a revival of *The Homecoming*




IT'S *REALLY* SPRING; NO MORE WAR (THOUGH THE WAR was improbably brief); no more cold weather (though the winter was improbably mild); no more *Daily News* strike (though the denouement was improbably happy). The crocuses are wilting, and the tulips are

in bloom; the Oscars are over, and the Pulitzers are imminent; the NCAA Final Four is history, and they're playing ball up at Yankee Stadium—and, even better, George Steinbrenner is prohibited from being anywhere near the players. It turns out the Yankees' owner had tried hard to plant negative press stories about John Dowd, the lawyer who led the official investigation of him, and even begged *Sports Illustrated* to publish the highly relevant news that Dowd and his wife had adopted black children. Is it time for Major League Baseball to consider capital punishment?  It's clearer than ever that Steinbrenner and his kind are headed for history's dustbin.

It's *really* spring



The Census Bureau announced that the U.S. is becoming non-white at an incredible clip. In 1980, 15 percent of Americans were black, Hispanic, Asian or American Indian; today, it's 20 percent. At that rate, we'll *all* be minorities in 35 years. "It's going to cause some turmoil," says Ben Wattenberg, the political demographer, "but on balance it's an incredibly poetic fact."  Down in Louisiana, they've been tending to focus more on the turmoil than on the poetry. David Duke, the Ku Klux Klan official turned sex-book author turned Republican legislator, is planning to run for governor this fall. The incumbent, Buddy Roemer, a Democrat, announced in March that he is running for reelection—as an anti-Duke Republican. The moment he switched his party affiliation, he visited the White House and suddenly began talking just like a certain high-ranking, war-winning, verb-and-pronoun-eschewing Republican. "Not perfect, this



party," said Roemer of the GOP. "But in a prime position to open up."

Roemer turns himself into a Republican on command; Bush turns himself overnight from an unloved, risk-averse wimp into a damn-the-polls president-for-life. "Bush," said a White House official, summarizing his boss's recent performance as commander in chief, "went *nuts*. It's amazing." And Saddam Hussein



turns himself into a democratic reformer. Still, wishful, premature rumors of his exile proliferated. "Saddam," said one of General Schwarzkopf's staff officers, "has shown up in more places than Elvis."

According to Major Rhonda Cornum, one of our POWs released in Baghdad, her captors weren't interested in American battle plans; they wanted to know whether she was friends with Brooke Shields and Sly Stallone. (It caused no turmoil, but on balance—Saddam and Elvis, now Brooke and Sly—it is a poetic fact.) Aside from that, she says, they were very nice—unlike the secret police, who committed unspeakable atrocities: one Kuwaiti told a reporter that the Iraqis who picked him up "did not let me sleep and made me sit naked on a bottle of hot sauce." *Good God!* Does Amnesty International know about this?

Having been so...*thrifty* concerning the Gulf War, the Japanese had the cash to back the Tampa Bay Lightning, the new National Hockey League expansion team. Fortunately, there aren't many Jewish hockey players: the uptick in anti-Semitism among the Japanese may be, on balance, a poetic fact (just who *is* running the world these days?), but it is nevertheless causing some turmoil. Neil Sandberg, an official of the American Jewish Committee, has been in Japan trying to get the government to discourage distribution of a spate of recent anti-Semitic books. The Japanese, Sandberg says, are uncomprehending: "They told us, 'You're a member of a superior race, and you come from a successful

group, and we're surprised this material concerns you.'"

The lawyer Alan Dershowitz, a member of the same superior race, has been representing Jim Bakker, and he got the religious leader and theme-park impresario's prison sentence thrown out on appeal. "Jim and I are really sold on him," Tammy Bakker said of Dershowitz, "and think he's the greatest. *He's our kind of people*—a real down-to-earth, nice man.

One of my biggest desires now is to meet him." Such teams: Saddam and Elvis, Brooke and Sly, now Dershowitz and the Bakkers.

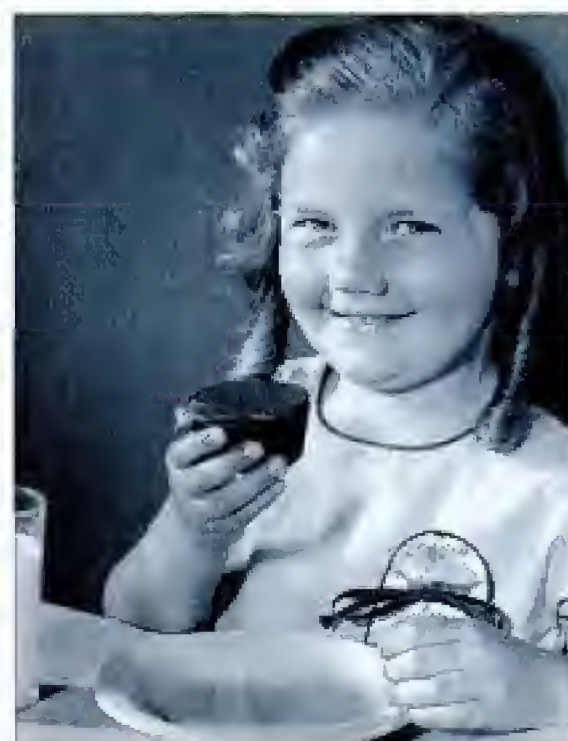
Jim Bakker gets 45 years for selling too many time-shares to credulous born-again Christians; Daniel Rakowitz, the marijuana buff and roommate-murderer who dismembered and boiled his victim on the kitchen stove (*East 9th Street—it's so bohemian!*), is acquitted by reason of insanity. "I hope someday," Rakowitz said to the jury, "we can smoke a joint together." He also offered to smoke a joint with the judge, and that caused some turmoil.

Speaking of turmoil, speaking of incredibly poetic facts: during the late 1980s, according to a \$4 million sexual-harassment suit filed by a former waitress at The Four Seasons, the manager of the restaurant confronted her with "a large white radish carved into the form of a male genital." But these are the nineties, and a few weeks ago, inmates at a prison in Texas rioted, either because (1) they had been mistreated by guards, (2) they were crammed into uninhabitably small cells or (3) they had been served too few vegetables in the mess hall. The correct answer—these are the nineties, don't forget—is (3), and the rioters held the jailers at bay with (1) zip guns fashioned in the prison workshops, (2) smuggled-in automatic weapons or (3) ordinary kitchen utensils. These are the nineties; *guess*.

The nineties: soon-

er or later it always gets back to that, doesn't it? Take McDonald's. On the one hand, they're advising the city of Los Angeles on how to make L.A. municipal workers more courteous (evidently not including the police), and all over the country they're introducing a new, low-fat hamburger. On the other hand, at McDonald's in five southern states you can now actually order catfish. So is this the beginning of the anodyne twenty-first century? Or a return to the grungy nineteenth? Or—our bet—a misbegotten new hybrid? If we can have Saddam and Elvis, Brooke and Sly, Dershowitz and Tammy Faye, why not *Blade Runner* starring Huck Finn? Indeed, the evil-Huck-Finn thing is picking up speed. Sumter, South Carolina—first the Civil War, now this—has just had its second case of attempted murder of a teacher by a grade-school child since last fall. Both children used rat poison, the first as a blow against an unjust recess policy, the more recent one (the child tainted a *cupcake*) to prevent the teacher from calling her parents. Meanwhile, a computer programmer in Florida slipped his neighbor a Coke laced with thallium nitrate—that is, *rat poison*—and succeeded in killing her; he was found out by an undercover cop who had infiltrated (this is the poetic fact) his Mensa group.

Even Liz Smith (the Widow Douglas of our story) has mastered nineties-speak. "[Fox chairman] Barry [Diller] wants to develop me into a serious commentator for serious television news," she says of her new job on *Personalities*, Fox's ersatz *Entertainment Tonight*. Her timing couldn't be better: Brooke Shields, Sly Stallone and Smith's other regular subjects are now interesting mainly to Iraqis, and with Bill Moyers running for president (according to a Tom Wicker column), there's an opening in the serious-commentator-for-serious-television-news field. Saddam and Elvis, Dershowitz and Tammy Faye, now Liz Smith and the spirit of Edward R. Murrow. It's going to cause some turmoil, but on balance it's an incredibly pathetic fact. ☾



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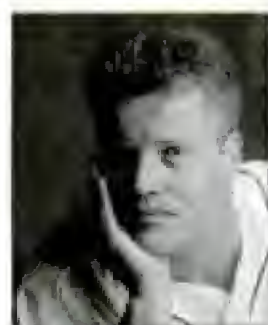
Contributors



Few men seem as reporterly, in the old-fashioned, Damon Runyon-esque sense, as SPY's own **MICHAEL HAINEY**; he was born and raised in Chicago, lives in an actual boardinghouse, is fond of gabardine and suspenders and has been heard to say—we swear—"I was out tomcattin' last weekend." Naturally, his contribution to this issue is a police story: a profile of the LAPD's pugnacious Daryl Gates.




TOM MCNICHOL has written for SPY about smarmy lobbyists, the inside-the-Beltway mentality and, in this issue, Art Buchwald's unfunniness. A regular contributor to National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, McNichol says he has met NPR's Cokie Roberts and insists that she is "a lot taller than you think."



Cincinnatian **C. F. PAYNE**, who illustrated this month's story on Orion Pictures, is perhaps the only SPY contributing editor whose original artwork for the magazine was purchased by Malcolm Forbes—a noteworthy distinction, especially considering that the drawing in question, an illustration for the November 1989 feature "Inside Bohemian Grove," depicts Forbes urinating into a patch of shrubbery. Payne's work has also appeared in *Rolling Stone* and *GQ*.



FRED SHAVER's precarious career as a United States Information Agency officer began in 1963, when he was sworn in by Edward R. Murrow; continued through the late sixties, when he had the good fortune to be assigned to Vietnam; and concluded in the mid-eighties, when he served in the African nations of Gabon and Nigeria. His reminiscence of the Gabon years, and of that nation's lecherous despot, appears in this issue. 



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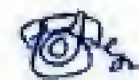
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From the SPY Mailroom



We're feeling a little melancholy—partly nostalgia for the war, partly the fact that our lunch has not arrived, and it's been 45 minutes since we ordered. There is little we can do about the latter, but Dave McEnery of San Antonio has sent us the lyrics and sheet music to a song of his that is helping us relive the former. It's called "The Soldier's Letter (Desert Storm Song)," and McEnery—who performs as "Red River Dave"—says he wrote it while his heart had stopped "for some time" following a heat stroke. "While I was dead," he writes, "there was an angel in white who came to me with a glowing wand in her hand. She looked just like Amelia Earhart. She tapped me on the forehead with her wand and said, 'You have been brought back to write the Desert Storm song. You shall call the song "The Soldier's Letter" and write it in honor of the precious, praying mothers who have loved ones serving God and country in the Persian Gulf conflict.'" We have room for just one of the six verses:

Cruel dictator, Saddam Hussein, by
invasion planned to gain
The great wealth of small Kuwait and
all it's spoil,
But free nations 'round the world,
with their battle flags unfurled,
Came to save the largest oil fields in
the world.

We're sure we're all having the same thought: epic poem about a war somewhere near the Mediterranean, stanza-by-stanza account, memorable characters—McEnery is only 16,000 verses shy of producing his own *Iliad*. Our advice: don't stop now.

We'll stop ourselves for a moment, however, to address the obvious: that our many-months-in-the-making redesign of SPY is unveiled in the very issue you hold before you. This is also—coincidentally—our first issue with some new investors aboard. So, naturally, you'll be looking to see whether we ►

Letters to SPY

Commie-Killers Are People, Too

As one of those trashed by the talented Richard Stengel, who accompanied us on our sojourn throughout Eastern Europe last year ["If It's Tuesday, This Must Be a Liberated Former Colony of the Soviet Empire," February], I am naturally offended and saddened by his sophomoric depiction of us as a bunch of bubbleheaded Ugly Americans. Richard certainly knows better. Even a cursory reading of his article reveals a reasonably literate, articulate group who've done their homework. It's been said most Americans know more about sports scores than they do about their Bill of Rights. That cannot be said about this crowd, who on occasion even had to correct Richard's Princeton/Oxford revisionist knowledge of history on such items as the Hitler-Stalin pact, which led to the decimation of Poland in 1939. We didn't merely learn years later that the Communists were unrepentant imperialists; anyone with open eyes could understand it axiomatically, given the basis of their illegitimate power.

By the time this appears in print, Gorbachev may have moved the tanks around his disintegrating empire in a vain attempt to salvage his "kingdom"—and journalists may again take up their trusty laptops to pooh-pooh the freedom fight of those risking their lives rather than vegetating under the horrors of Communism.

To paraphrase the Heritage Foundation: to earn such scorn and vicious treatment, we must be doing something right.

"Diamond Gary" Hofmeister
Indianapolis, Indiana

Richard Stengel replies, "As a liberal, I've often found myself in the position of disliking people I agree with, but on the 'Capitalism Has Won!' tour I was in the unaccustomed role of liking folks I disagreed with. One of those was the knowledgeable Diamond Gary. On the ideological front,

however, I found my fellow travelers curiously inconsistent. They generally considered Gorbachev the cat's meow. When I suggested that we not bolster Gorbachev because he could turn out to be a conservative—that is, a diehard, dictatorial Communist—I was dismissed by my colleagues as hopelessly naive. And as for the risks these folks took in the cause of freedom, the only one I could recall was that a few of them put some of their money in volatile mutual funds."

On, Donner; On, Einstein

Regarding your article questioning the existence of Santa Claus ["SPY Junior: No, Virginia, There Isn't a Santa Claus!," February], I wonder if there isn't an error in your calculations.

The 214,200 reindeer pulling this sleigh, assuming a mean length between harnesses (at two abreast) of six feet, would create a chain approximately 121.7 miles long. Using your figure of 0.79 miles between houses, Santa could theoretically land on 154 houses per stop. Let's also assume that Santa is merely a front man and instead of going down chimneys himself he delegates that dirty, possibly flammable, task to those more physically appropriate for such behavior—his elves. This would enable Santa to process 154 sites at one time, assuming a uniform deer-to-gift-elf ratio along the length of the chain. All 91.8 million households containing well-behaved Christian kids could then be serviced with a little under 600,000 stops, or only 5.34 visits per second. Santa's average speed is now a much more reasonable 4.22 miles per second (about 15,000 mph).

I hope this clears things up.

Peter Curtiss

Boulder, Colorado

Fine, Mr. Curtiss, but that would mean that in the 0.79 miles between houses, reindeer are unsupported by roofs, and are thus left dangling from their tethers, which would strangle them. Besides, elves don't ride the sleigh. Now resume your life. ►►



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JUST FOR THE RECORD, IT'S LOUIS, BOSTON - ECLECTIC CLOTHING FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

"SPY Junior" was brilliant. Your magazine is excellent. Your writers—especially Philip Weiss, Ned Zeman, James Traub, Joe Queenan and Richard Stengel—fill a gap in the British market, which mainly consists of tedious toadying profiles and lackluster university reviews. How about a trip across the Atlantic for a British special?

*Name withheld
London, England*

Kinder, Gentler, Shorter

What does King Hussein's *size* have to do with anything ["Snow White and the Sovereign Dwarf," by Harriet Barovick, February]? A grotesque obsession threads through your pages that could be called physiqueism, or statureism. It is irritating. Sophomoric.

*Dale Douglas Mills
Seattle, Washington*

Your magazine undoubtedly holds the record for most uses of the word *liliputian* per annum. In the February issue alone, there are nine unflattering references to someone or other's diminutive stature. Among them, Carrie Fisher and Henry Kissinger are each called into question for employing techniques to conceal their lack of height. Who could blame them for doing so, if they knew your minions were about?

You cheapen the whole effort of insulting public figures for their pomposity or policies when you stoop to making fun of them for something that isn't their fault, especially when the ribbing takes on an obsessive quality. What's next, fat jokes?

*Adam Long
Portland, Oregon*

Revenge of the Nerds

After your groundbreaking articles on time travel and the effect of microwaves on Twinkies, we thought SPY was a reliable source of scientific information. That impression was shattered by your February Great Expectations column. You recklessly and incorrectly asserted that "only 36 percent of people have urine that gives off that special sulphur smell following a meal of

asparagus." While flawed research in the 1950s did come up with this conclusion, more recent studies show that *everyone* produces that smell—it is the ability to *detect* the odor that varies genetically. Your percentage is probably wrong, too. In a scientifically rigorous poll recently performed in Cambridge, 17 people said they could detect the smell and 8 couldn't. These results might be skewed by the fact that 67 people ignored the query completely.

That "special sulphur smell" is believed to come from methylmercaptan, which has the chemical formula HSCH_3 . Carl Feynman points out that this is obviously a breakdown product of the two compounds that give undigested asparagus its distinctive odor: $\text{H}_3\text{CSCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{C}(\text{O})\text{SCH}_3$ and $\text{H}_2\text{C}-\text{HC}(\text{O})\text{SCH}_3$. To former organic chemists like Carl, these are of course easily distinguishable from $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}-(\text{CH}_3)\text{CH}_2\text{COOH}$, the odor of the female rhesus monkey in heat. But to the lackadaisical authors of the Great Expectations column, perhaps they look the same. Frankly, we expected more from a column whose name is an anagram for "penetrate toxic gas."

(And contrary to the letter in your November 1990 issue, we are not "dweebish, bean-counting nurks.")

*Gary Sabot and Brian Silverman
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

The 1950s research is "flawed" only if you choose to believe these two nerds (not nurks), instead of last year's New York Times. Sabot and Silverman's "scientifically rigorous poll" was, as they later admitted to us, conducted privately. (Carl Feynman, we discovered after hours of phone calls to laboratories and research institutes, is a friend of theirs.) A world in which people can hound 92 friends and acquaintances for information about their urine and then disclose the results to magazines in other states is a far-from-perfect world.

Oxon Moron

In February's Review of Reviewers, Humphrey Greddon quotes Richard Locke's account of "the pure Oxford Union debating style"—"the reductive certainty, the flashing dichotomy" (whatever that may be; flashing as opposed to what?), "the precise wit that

can still cut it. We'll save you the effort: we can't. If this issue seems less sharp, less irreverent, it's because it is. We're not sure what went wrong. It may simply be that the new, larger typeface (you *did* notice) threw us, that we're essentially 10½-point writers and editors, and making the transition to 11-point is beyond our present abilities. (Certainly we have always felt that our jokes worked best in—and were indeed created specifically for—smaller-size type, and with a gray background. Half a point may not seem like much, but in dealing with the mail, it can be the difference between merciless skewering and benign acknowledgment. Admit it—we went pretty easy on Red River Dave back there, didn't we? We didn't even *touch* the Amelia Earhart line.) So here we are—it's the talkies, and we're the silent-movie stars of satirical magazines.

"I thought of writing a letter in the style of others I have read in SPY—i.e., with that hipper-than-thou attention paid to phrasing and wit—but then grew tired thinking about all the effort and opted for plainspeak," writes Richard Bedard of Bensalem, Pennsylvania. "After all, even if I did manage a couple of nice, hip paragraphs, you could out-hip me with the editorial italics at the end." Once upon a time, Mr. Bedard, but no longer. Our first impulse is, of course, to confuse (to hilarious effect) Bedard with Bensalem, maybe say something dismissive about your use of *plainspeak*, maybe make some generally derogatory remark about Pennsylvania. But something—new design? new owners?—holds us back. And when you go on to ask us, for no apparent reason, how many teeth CBS correspondent Bill Plante has, we find that no exasperated putdown is forthcoming. Instead—incredibly—we start making phone calls, eventually reaching Mr. Plante's son.

Mr. Plante has 31 teeth.

Must we spell it out? We would never have spent the time and resources to answer some insane question about Bill Plante's teeth in 10½-point type.

But we haven't gone completely soft. We're sorry, for example, that we're unable to underwrite *The Forgotten Facts*, which its editor, Scott Royer III, describes to us as "a small

underground publication located at the high school that is known and Santa Rosa High School." So: as we understand it, *FF* is published—located, rather—at *two* high schools, one of which is known but not named and one of which is named (Santa Rosa) but not known. Whatever. But if someone else would like to help Mr. Royer realize his dream of eventually publishing a second and even a third page, we're sure he'd be glad to hear from you. Good luck.

We also regret being unable to assist David C. Swanson of Manhattan in his private vendetta against a particular Upper West Side bicycle store. Mr. Swanson may indeed have lost his front derailleur under suspicious circumstances—but is that reason enough for us to drop everything and "run a little investigation of New York bicycle repair shops"? No, Mr. Swanson. We will conduct no such investigation. We have our priorities straight. Our lunch has still not arrived. Your front derailleur means nothing to us. Sorry: it means *very little* (new design, new owners).

Well, maybe that's not such a bad idea, that bicycle-shop exposé. Or maybe something bigger on the whole bike-theft thing. We had an old Raleigh stolen right from our basement once, and it was chained.

Did you ever get a new derailleur, by the way? God, this *city*.

Hugh Hart of Evanston, Illinois, wonders whether there was "some kind of conspiracy" in the January issue of *Vanity Fair*. In her profile of Sophia Loren, Nancy Collins writes, "As we sit in Bungalow 11 of the Beverly Hills Hotel..." Several pages later, Bob Colacello begins his article on George Hamilton with "Bungalow 5 of the Beverly Hills Hotel..." (That story also includes a photo caption that reads, "Hamilton beside the Bungalow 5 pool.") "Free rooms in exchange for prominent plugola?" Mr. Hart wonders. Well, we're not that cynical. We prefer to assume that the *Vanity Fair* stylebook requires that writers mention themselves as frequently as their nominal subjects, even if that means being repetitious about the setting. (Besides, the Beverly Hills Hotel—a simply *wonderful* place that ►



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advertises in *SPY*—has always been very accommodating to us.)

And look whom we're letting back in this column (new design, new owners): we should have realized that no matter how much print was expended this past winter on Pete Rose and the Baseball Hall of Fame (the basic debate: Keep the Bum Out vs. Let the Bum In), the issue would never be considered exhausted until Frantic Fran Lilienfeld had her say. "'FAME' is his as a ballplayer & cannot be taken away from him," she wrote. "Gambling is like sex—very good when its good, & when bad, is still good." (This was clearly an early draft of the postcard; we can assume Ms. Lilienfeld would have polished and honed the phrasing if she'd had more time.) "**TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGIVE DIVINE—FOR THE KIDS IN AMERICA LET HIM TALK ABOUT THE LESSON He learned FROM HIS EXPerience as the best teacher—once admitted, he can always be removed to an even greater dishonor than today keeping him off.**" Ms. Lilienfeld's position, then, as far as we can tell: Let the bum in—*then* kick him out.

This from "Stuart De Ocampo, Philosopher," of Los Angeles: "The stupidity of the letters printed in your Letters to *SPY* is appalling. Are all your readers pseudo-intellectuals who spend their free time trying unsuccessfully to be witty? And don't you think you make an obscene display of your pettiness by following Donald Trump around as if he were an icon? Does anyone connected with *SPY* have any semblance of what is colloquially referred to as a life?" What a meanspirited fellow Mr. De Ocampo must be—wouldn't you all agree? Let's just ignore him.

In March we predicted the arrival of camouflage-patterned "Desert-Storm Chic" clothing ("We Make the Call: *SPY* Forecasts the Trends of the Nineties!," by David Kamp). Almost unbelievably, as our March issue was being assembled at the printer's we spotted three newspaper articles announcing that designers were hard at work on just such a line. Soundlessly mouthing the obvious question—*Whither satire?*—we rearranged our bulletproof shift and stretched out for a while.

Finally, *SPY*'S pervasive influence now extends from *Rolling Stone*, which recently referred to "faux naïf magician Doug Henning," to *Entertainment Weekly*, which just noted the "earnest faux naïf way" of a band called Ed's Redeeming Qualities, to the *Dayton Daily News*, whose movie critic a few months ago described a world that "has been taken over by short-fingered vulgarians." The time seemed ripe to quantify all this pervasive influence, so we ran a NEXIS search to determine whether *SPY* has in fact popularized such words as *faux*, *vulgarian* and, oh, *preternatural*. Because the NEXIS data base is larger now than when *SPY* began publishing, we controlled the experiment by combing the same sources year by year. The sources: AP, UPI, Reuters, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Adweek*, *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, *Folio*, *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Maclean's*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, the *Washington Quarterly*, *The Washington Post*. The results:

	1986	1990
Uses of <i>faux</i> :	244	515
of <i>vulgarian</i> :	17	45
of <i>preternatural</i> :	19	35

Well, we're convinced. (Memo to ourselves: in 1996 tabulate general usage of *putative*.)

But you know something? We don't mind.

New design? New owners? Nope—lunch has just arrived. ☺

CORRECTIONS

In December's *Times* column, we overestimated the salary of *Times* Metro News reporter John Tierney, who in fact earns less than \$75,000 per year. In "Chain of Foolishness" (December) former Ventura Films executive Stephen Girard's name was misspelled. And in our February story on Queen Noor, we misidentified the British royal couple who benefited from the Jordanian royal couple's hospitality. The temporary dwellers in the Jordanians' Ascot home were actually the Duke and Duchess of York. ☺

runs to paradox and aphorism"—and remarks that "his description has the ring of complete fantasy."

I'll say. Of course, standards may have improved dramatically since I last sat in on an Oxford Union debate a dozen or so years ago, but one of my more disillusioning experiences as a new undergraduate was the first debate I attended, which instilled an as yet uncorrected impression of a bunch of pompous, immature buffoons successfully disguising any intellectual benefits they may have acquired as students. (Observe any House of Commons debate and you will see the same thing: it is surely not original to note that the nursery-food-loving British ruling class, if we can still call it that, appears not to grow up.) The students with the best minds seemed to avoid the place (though it does have a useful library with comfortable, if dilapidated, armchairs); the only distinguished contributions, depressingly rare, come from guest speakers. This may be inevitable: the institution of the debate seems to inspire mere show, the playing of silly, immature games that have everything to do with scoring points and nothing to do with the advancement of understanding (as the occasional debates on *Firing Line* helpfully remind us).

Later, in the context of remarks on some overcited Japanese movie, Mr. Greddon quotes one Leslie Gelb's assertion that the law of noncontradiction means "you can't have two truths in the same place at the same time." That is, of course, false: rather, it means that two or more contradictory statements cannot all be true. Unless they are old-fashioned objectivists, it should be clear that four people, as presumably in Gelb's example, can have different perceptions of the world without contradicting one another and hence without violating the law of noncontradiction—an observation that rather undermines Gelb's tiresomely trendy bit of intercultural epistemology.

Simon Roberts

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Humphrey Greddon replies, "I am grateful to Mr. Roberts for confirming my speculation about the Oxford Union's pomposity and silliness. I suspect, however, that some-

one who makes observations that undermine another person's trendy bit of intercultural epistemology may have had a bit more to do with the Oxford Union than he is willing to admit."

Don't Kill the Messenger

I strongly condemn your actions with regard to Walter Monheit™ [Blurb-o-Mat, December 1990]. Mr. Monheit has served your magazine well through both prosperous and congressional times. Now, after all his hours of service, you turn on him, treating him as Dan Rather would treat a Republican presidential candidate. I know that I am speaking for many when I say that Walter Monheit provides the extra *ooof* your magazine needs.

Evan Coyne Maloney

Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

Monheit was reinstated beginning with the March issue, and the layoff didn't seem to affect him in the least: a total of 12 monacles, out of a possible 12, for the three movies he reviewed. Ooof, indeed.

This Little Piggy Had None

Ned Zeman's excellent piece about the art of American Kabuki [December] reminded me of a news story from a few years back: Apparently a woman who had visited Disneyland later filed suit because one of the Three Little Pigs had allegedly fondled her in a suggestive manner. The suit was dropped, however, when it was revealed that the pig suits don't have movable arms.

I've since hoped that the story would be made into a TV movie. There's something about the image of Raymond Burr cross-examining a man in a pig suit that I find irresistible.

Tom Huntington

Washington, D.C.

This One Had Roast Beef

Congratulations on your remarkably serious and sensible article about the National Endowment for the Arts ["How the NEA Really Works," by Mark Lasswell, November 1990].

Avoid all roast-beef sandwiches and platters offered for sale in the Union

Square area. Insist on french fries before they are fried in oil.

Stephen Unsino

Eastchester, New York

Interesting. A performance letter. Fascinating, really. About the grant—we'll get back to you.

Further to your "What's in a Name? (Special Gulf-Crisis Edition)" [December], chomp on this:

**SCUD MISSILE
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M. K. Nadonley

Washington, D.C.

I just received your well-argued, handsomely typeset letter cajoling me to renew my subscription. While I'm sure your making a form letter so humane and doleful is calculated for its humorous effect (which then becomes a clever and I'm sure effective sales tool) and not to actually begin an intercourse with your readers, it has nevertheless moved me to write to explain why I'm not renewing my subscription.

I love SPY. Rumors I hear that SPY is in financial trouble break my heart (we'd *all* be staring down the barrel of a dismal reality of life without SPY) and are in part the reason I'm writing this letter: to reassure you that although I've taken a second apartment and mail has become a bit of a hassle, I'll still be buying each and every issue of SPY—at the higher newsstand price.

Good luck to you guys. I've got nothing but respect for you. Count on my support; it's money in the bank.

Jon Ross

Santa Monica, California

You like us—you really like us! Actually, we're now on extremely solid financial footing (see not-so-oblique references to sale of magazine in From the SPY Mailroom), but that's no reason for you—and your friends—not to buy three or four copies of every issue. Or even five.

SPY welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Typewritten letters are preferred. Please include your daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. ☽



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Gumbel II: The Beginning of the End?

After tampering with the careers of producers and cohosts for reasons of his own egotism, Bryant Gumbel must feel like a tragic character anticipating a fifth-act comeuppance for his treachery. Thanks in large part to Gumbel's machinations, the ratings of the *Today* show continue to totter, and the War in the Gulf did little for the program's luster or for NBC News's prestige in general. While ABC and CBS were broadcasting satellite pictures of Forrest Sawyer and Dan Rather from a liberated Kuwait City, NBC was struggling to get a phone line out of Kuwait. As for the morning shows, Fox's *Good Day New York* has been beating out *Today* in the local ratings, and the generally pathetic *CBS This Morning* has crept within half a point of Gumbel's show in the national ratings. Aside from the indignity of competing with Fox and CBS, *Today's* star has suffered a series of vexations that suggest a creeping loserishness has begun to envelop him, even as his \$2 million sinecure appears safe.

Annoyance No. 1: When Deborah Norville joined *Today* as a newsreader, Gumbel relentlessly flirted with her offscreen—a result, no doubt, of her resemblance to the cocktail waitresses and stewardesses (or stews, as he calls them) he chats up when he's on the road. But as soon as the press cast Norville as the Other Woman who had usurped Jane Pauley's place on the sofa, Gumbel turned his back on Debbie. He blames her for the show's troubles and believes she treats him without the appropriate girlish deference. He has fought with executive producer Tom Capra over removing her—more trouble for the feckless, not-altogether-competent Capra, whose days may be numbered.

It was widely assumed that Norville would take a six-month maternity leave beginning last fall (she had her child in February); she would thus have left *Today* while viewers still thought her a vixen. But while Norville looks like a cupcake, she proved shrewder than anyone thought. Instead of going on maternity leave—a leave, if Gumbel had had his way, from which she would never have re-

turned—Norville remained on the air, growing ever-more-visibly pregnant, until five days before her son was born. Eight months ago NBC could have acceded to Gumbel's wishes and summarily dispatched Norville. At present, it would be bad business, at a show that strives for a family aura, to toss a mother and newborn into the street. Remember, CBS received bad press last winter when it fired Meredith Vieira from *60 Minutes* while she was pregnant—the vision of a weepy Norville nursing her infant on *Oprah* terrifies NBC News executives.

When Norville left the broadcast on the Friday prior to delivering—she spent a month at home with her son, Niki—Gumbel had to be ordered by Capra to bid her farewell on the air and told staffers, *She's not coming back*. Well, she has, and Gumbel racks up his first loss in a long time.

Annoyance No. 2: What heart doesn't warm to Joe Garagiola's folksy banter, so perfectly suited to radio in the 1940s? Apparently not those of the important people on the third floor of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, who will almost certainly purge good old Joe by summer. Garagiola, readers may remember, was brought on the broadcast at the insistence of Gumbel, and he is one col-

league with whom Gumbel remains friendly off the air. So his inevitable leave-taking suggests that Gumbel may be back on cool terms with NBC News president Michael Gartner, with whom he'd achieved a difficult rapprochement after the Pauley brouhaha.

Annoyance No. 3: Dick Ebersol—briefly *Today's* executive producer, and Gumbel's co-conspirator in the chain of events that sent the show to ratings Coventry—currently oversees NBC's preparations for its coverage of the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Sports fans may remember Gumbel's NBC anchoring of the Seoul games in 1988; yet Gumbel has not been asked to host Barcelona. During his Seoul days, Gumbel would regularly bad-mouth NBC Sports producers to his pals in News, and he was also one of the few nonpolitical visitors to demand bodyguards.

If Gumbel's old chum Ebersol has passed him over for the 1992 Olympics chair, how much clout can *Today's* host still have left?

Meanwhile, Jane Pauley fares no better in her prime-time vehicle, *Real Life With Jane Pauley*. Pauley was thought to have a large fol-

lowing of devoted fans, but this season her show is placing 95th out of 129. *Real Life* has traded time slots with *Exposé* and now follows that more popular show, but even this hasn't

helped. NBC executives would cancel *Real Life* in a second if only they had something with which to replace it. With Pauley's show on the rocks, and Gumbel apparently being edged out of the power loop, the old morning team must be looking back fondly to the days of offscreen intrigue and onscreen popularity. —Laureen Hobbs



Bryant

While Deborah Norville looks like a cupcake, she proved shrewder than anyone thought

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Casualties of War

It's been quiet out here. Too quiet. Six weeks of war will do that to a town, and until the bombs stopped falling on Baghdad and Kuwait, the important inhabitants of Hollywood were CNN-addicted shut-ins just like the rest of us. The only difference was they were watching the war on 54-inch screens in lacquer-cabineted media rooms. The resulting period of inactivity was startling. There were no multibillion-dollar Japanese studio buyouts. No executive sackings. No high-minded pseudo-internal memos from Disney chairman Jeff "Sparky" Katzenberg.

But unlike the rest of the country, which watched the news to stay abreast of war developments, keep track of loved ones and/or monitor Tom Brokaw's seemingly endless supply of turtlenecks, Hollywood's studio executives tuned in simply to determine how the conflict would affect American filmgoing choices—particularly those choices involving completed films or films already in production.

At Warners the entire production slate of blood-and-guts action films, nearly 100 titles strong, is in question. Don't even mention the name Shane Black, the screenwriter who was paid \$1.75 million for the violence-riddled script to the Bruce Willis thriller *The Last Boy Scout*, now in production; Warners is now kicking itself for having bought that screenplay, and many more like it.

Disney, in the midst of an uncharacteristic lapse in quality control—*Scenes from a Mall*; the soon-to-be-disastrous *Marrying Man*, starring Alec Baldwin and Kim Basinger; the dubious Kathleen Turner vehicle *Warsawsky*—is concerned that today's hunky young male stars will now suffer from a severe credibility problem: whereas Clark Gable, Glenn Ford and Jimmy Stewart famously did their patriotic duty during wartime, Johnny Depp and Christian Slater twerpishly stayed home. Katzenberg is worried that returning vets and regular civilians will no longer buy today's kids in macho, valorous roles as they did when Tom Cruise starred in *Top Gun*.

A similar war-movie wariness pervades Columbia, Tri-Star and the beleaguered Orion and MGM/Pathé. Tri-Star is petrified about the June opening of *Hudson Hawk*, the \$75-million Bruce Willis-Joel Silver extravaganza. Its dreadful word of mouth and horrible trailer suggest that epic failure lies ahead, that never again (meaning, in Hollywood, not for at least two or three years) will the industry fall prey to eighties-style, free-spending excess. Unless, of course, *Hudson Hawk* is a hit.

Both 20th Century Fox and Universal are fortifying their development rosters with winsome, clever, John Hughes-ian projects and trying earnestly to avoid violent Stallone-age pictures that, in the view of at least one Fox executive, might appear bogus and laughable in the current climate. Indeed, the conventional wisdom out here is that after Saddam Hussein, the war's two biggest losers are Stallone and Hollywood's left-wing political caucuses.

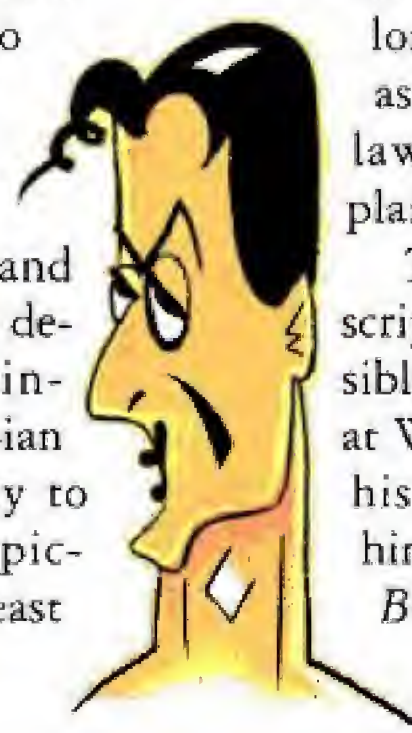
Unlike Schwarzenegger, whose career has benefited enormously from his emergence as a sort of found-object comedy star, Stallone appears to have worn out his welcome with Hollywood and the public. His image is too firmly bound up with Reagan-era

power fantasies, and his recent public attempts to appear more sensitive and cerebral—complete with nonprescription eyeglasses—seem as useless and transparent as, well, his nonprescription eyeglasses. *Oscar*, the comedy vehicle he just wrapped, is generally regarded as too desperate, too late, even though Stallone (grudgingly) played the straight man in the picture. But then, he is still something of an action-star draw abroad, which is a market he wishes to protect. To that end, he recently sued the social commentator [and SPY contributing editor] Taki for pointing out in his column in London's *Spectator* that during Vietnam, Stallone spent his draft-eligible years lying low in Switzerland, where he taught girls' athletics. This episode has been pointed out countless times in American publications; Stallone has chosen to challenge the assertion in Britain, where libel laws overwhelmingly favor the plaintiff.

Trims and Ends: Anybody got a script for Tom Hanks? Hanks, possibly the last remaining movie star at William Morris, has already fired his former manager for advising him to take millions for roles like *Bonfire's* Sherman McCoy and Joe in *Joe Versus the Volcano*. Now he's threatening to leave Will Mo unless they come up with a surefire Oscar nomination part... Speaking of Morris, the agents remaining there

breathed a general sigh of relief at the latest round of defections to ICM. It seems the main motivation for the exit of so many agents was the Will Mo pay scale—and the agents who've hung on are hoping the keepers of the purse strings have learned their lesson.

See you Monday night at Mortons.
—Celia Brady



Sly

Warner Bros.'s entire slate of blood-and-guts action films is in question; don't even mention the name Shane Black

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To receive a copy of the September 1990 issue's original Rotisserie League Life article, send us a check or money order for \$1 (no cash or credit cards accepted). Also, old-timers playing the magazine version since last September can get bimonthly scoring results for that contest by mail, at no cost. Send one stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope for each score update to SPY's Rotisserie Update, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003.

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111 baseball moguls
112 Robert Maxwell

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203 Dennis DeConcini
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702 get bought out by the Japanese
703 own the film rights to a tragic tale
704 "900" phone lines

705 Simplese
706 sleep with a celebrity
707 win on *America's Funniest Home Videos*
708 win the lottery
709 write a screenplay
710 war profiteering

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801 James Dean
802 Buddy Holly
803 JFK
804 John Lennon
805 Marilyn Monroe
806 Jim Morrison
807 Elvis Presley
808 Andy Warhol
809 Malcolm X
810 Abe Lincoln

SEXPOT

901 Tom Cruise
902 Sherilyn Fenn
903 Andy Garcia
904 Mel Gibson
905 John F. Kennedy Jr.
906 Madonna
907 Michelle Pfeiffer
908 Julia Roberts
909 Claudia Schiffer
910 Andie MacDowell



1991 Rotisserie League Life Official Guidelines: 1. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. 2. Description of contest: SPY's Rotisserie League Life is an interactive telephone game in which the caller can use his knowledge of current events. 3. Term of game: Game begins January 1, 1991, and continues through June 30, 1991. A caller may sign up at any time during the term, one cannot get Social Security number. 4. Telephone requirement: Callers with a touch-tone telephone can play the game from anywhere in the continental United States by dialing 1-900-884-4-SPY at any time, 24 hours a day, during the term. Callers from rotary telephones are unable to play. 5. Reservations: Anyone with a Social Security number can play the game; anyone under the age of 18 must get parental permission before calling. All prizes won by anyone under 18 will be awarded in his name to his parent or legal guardian. 6. Rules availability: This game is subject to the complete Official Rules. A copy of the Official Rules, the alternate method of entry under a complete list of winners can be obtained, free of charge, in person from PFI, 919 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022, during normal business hours, or write to SPY's Rotisserie League Life, c/o PFI, P.O. Box 7012, 100 Hudson, New York, NY 10022. AT&T is not a sponsor of the game.

Little Big-Picture Man

The same grit and determination that made his *7 Days* a favorite of New York's youngish would-be movers and shakers has made Adam Moss, New York's most huggable editor-for-hire, the *Times*'s most celebrated new employee. In late winter Moss began his job as a consultant to managing editor Joseph Lelyveld, in charge of nothing in particular but on hand, in Moss's own words, "to help out in any way I can, particularly with new projects down the pike."

As readers of this column will recall, Moss had some weeks earlier met with brand-new culture editor Paul Goldberger and new *Times Magazine* editor Warren Hoge to discuss employment prospects, and both had declined to hire him. But the ever-resourceful Moss, tapping into the same genius that spawned such unforgettable *7 Days* features as "28 Ways to Make a Baby Laugh" and "Cowboy Bars: The Good, the Bad & the Ugly," managed an end run, bypassing Goldberger and Hoge and dealing directly with their superior, Lelyveld. The result is that the *Times* now has its first-ever Big Picture man, a circumstance rendered all the more astounding by the fact that publisher Punch Sulzberger has ordered hiring freezes in most of the recession-plagued paper's departments.

For Moss, who figures that his every gesture is monitored by media barons from here to Hanover Square, the *Times* post is major-league journalism's long-overdue recognition of his manifold talents: despite his new friendship with Si Newhouse, Moss was offered no top Condé Nast job; and despite his previous employment as the deputy editor of *Esquire*, Moss was denied the editorships of Hearst Corporation's *Esquire* and *Connoisseur*. Perhaps they felt they had an abundance of Big Picture people already on the premises.

For Goldberger and Hoge, Moss's arrival was just the addition of another colleague, nothing to worry about. Listen to how unworried Goldberger sounded when the *New York Post*'s Page Six called him for comment on

his new colleague: "Culture is not one of Adam's mandates," Goldberger said. "*He is not in any way being brought in above me.*" And Hoge, who couldn't get the *Times*'s *7 Days*-ish *Blocks* off the ground and didn't hire Moss because he apparently didn't recognize the Big Picture abilities of the little fellow, is surely not in any way threatened by Moss's sudden on-staff presence and evident belief that he will take over the magazine within two years.

Of course, Moss's successful employment campaign consisted of more than one simple visit to Lelyveld's office. Indeed, his old friend Frank Rich had for years been trying to orchestrate a deal that would bring Moss to the *Times*. Last winter, when Goldberger's and Hoge's rebuffs appeared to dash all hopes for a *Times* embrace of Moss, Rich pulled off his masterstroke: together with his girlfriend, *Times* theater reporter Alex Witchel, he threw a dinner party for Moss, Lelyveld and his wife, White House correspondent Maureen Dowd and the television personality Michael Kinsley. (It has been noted by more than one of Rich's colleagues that his Riverside Drive apartment's layout is almost identical to that of Orso, the theater-dis-

trict restaurant where Rich orders his Sankaccinos, and which serves as the *Times*'s de facto senior-staff canteen.)

Ultimately, Moss was obliged to suggest himself that he be hired as a consulting editor—remember, *he's* the Big Picture man, not Lelyveld—but he has since talked himself into believing that the newly created position was Lelyveld's idea.

The arrival of the 33-year-old Moss has been met with, at best, a gleeful condescension. His Morgan-Entrekin-meets-Christopher-Robin brand of cuteness—pajama tops worn as shirts, studiously tousled hair, tan Hush Puppies worn with dark suits, adenoidal speaking voice—has prompted many staffers to treat him like a visiting grammar-school intern, as if Macaulay Culkin had stopped by to bone up for a role in a forthcoming film about a newspaper prodigy. Reporters in the third-floor newsroom have been heard to ask earnestly, "Who is that child?"

The location of Moss's desk has made him even more of a curiosity. He sits in a prominent position in the newsroom where the message desk, rendered obsolete by voice mail, used to be. And while the reporters face north and the editors south, Moss's desk is the only one on an east-west axis—perfect Big Picture

positioning.

The hiring of Moss, who has never worked as either a magazine writer or a newspaper reporter, has triggered an unprecedented amount of resentment and indignation; never before have so many *Times* people been so eager to do in a new colleague. And he's not likely to get



Adam

Moss suggested that the *Times* hire him as a consulting editor, but he has talked himself into believing it was Joseph Lelyveld's idea

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much in the way of emotional support: the *Times*, a rough-and-tumble, quasi-macho outpost where men wear dark suits and conservative ties, is not known for its sensitivity.

The most significant factor in Moss's favor, aside from his not inconsiderable talents, is his cordial relationship with the intense, fiercely intelligent Lelyveld, who is generally considered to be the heir apparent to editor in chief Max Frankel. Lelyveld's influence is such that the Mossification of the *Times* is not as unlikely as the staff might like to think. Among the new boy's early major assignments was rethinking the paper's sports coverage. And in his first few days on the job, Moss nearly netted the *Times* one of journalism's megatalents: shortly before she signed on with *New York Newsday*, the gossip columnist Liz Smith telephoned a writer who had profiled her in *7 Days* and, virtually weeping, asked if he'd put in a good word for her with Mr. Moss. One can only imagine what *Chronicle*, the *Times*'s bone-dry gossip column, would have been like in Liz's hands:

...A lot of people are saying that Jessye Norman, who sang at the United Jewish Appeal's benefit commemorating Yehudi Menuhin's 75th birthday, has gotten too "heavy" for her own good. This is NOT the case. Jessye has what we Texans call "big bones" and has never looked or sounded better, as any of the guests, who included Isaac Stern, Kiri Te Kanawa, the historians William Shirer and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the Kissingers and the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, will tell you. Also in attendance was Parks Commissioner Betsy Gotbaum, looking slim and well toned in an above-the-knee skirt....

Liz at the *Times*? Don't sweat it, Paul: thanks to *Newsday*, she is not in any way being brought in above you.

—J. J. Hunsecker

Naked City

The Usual Suspects

1

Columbia Pictures chairman **Peter Guber**, a dedicated family man, usually defers to his swinging partner, **Jon Peters**, in matters of brazen professional crassness. But not always. Expounding recently on the nature of Hollywood, Guber declared to a female acquaintance, "The thing you have to understand is, this is a pussy-driven business."



Leslie

sibly to caution the newcomer on the shortcomings of his first feature's Hollywood distributor, the younger director took in his hero's advice eagerly. That is, until Lee, knowing that the movie's tentative release date coincided with that of his own *Jungle Fever*, came forth with his ulterior motive: *If your film comes out at the same time as mine*, Lee said, *not altogether good-naturedly, I will crush it. And your next film.*

2

There's little chance that **Richard Holbrooke**, the mega-networker of the Carter administration turned investment banker, will soon fulfill his dream of becoming some Democrat's secretary of State. But Holbrooke, a sort of **Mort Zuckerman** without the money, has found another way into the spotlight: *Have I told you that my book is coming out?* he has excitedly been asking friends, generally adding, *My book's being excerpted in The New Yorker*, or *My book is a Book-of-the-Month Club selection*, or *What I always wanted to do is move to New York and write a book, and now I've done it*. As it turns out, the title of Holbrooke's eagerly anticipated book is *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, and its well-connected, media-savvy, nonelected Democrat protagonist-author is not Holbrooke but the man for whom he served as amanuensis, **Clark Clifford**.



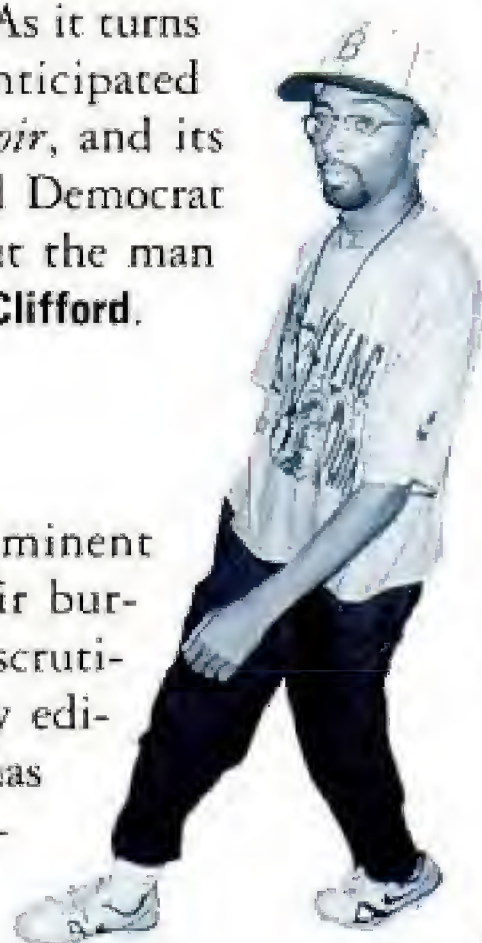
Peter

4

Though CBS has tried strenuously to peddle the idea that *60 Minutes* appointee **Leslie Stahl** is not **Meredith Vieira's** replacement but **Harry Reasoner's**, Stahl will nevertheless encounter some viewers who regard her as just one more blond, hard-edged newsgirl, indistinguishable from the rest. Stahl discovered as much when she dined at a posh Manhattan bistro recently. Upon her arrival at the restaurant the maître d' grew jittery with excitement: he fawned over the White House correspondent, offered fulsome praise and delivered to her table a bottle of wine on the house. Following these world-class acts of celebrity groveling, the maître d' remarked, "I can't wait to tell my wife that **Judy Woodruff** [of *The MacNeill/Lehrer Newshour*, on PBS] was in my restaurant!" But even though Stahl may have recognition problems, she should get along fine with the rough-and-tumble, man-musky *60 Minutes* ringmaster, **Don Hewitt**. Once, when she was doing a stand-up for a news story, a gust of wind blew under her skirt, causing her legs to be exposed, **Marilyn**-like. Stahl was unfazed by her crew's wolf whistles. "Sorry, fellas," she said, "I don't have time to turn you on." To which one crew member responded, "That's okay, Leslie—we've seen balls before." ☛

3

Spike Lee's status as the nation's preeminent black filmmaker has forced some unfair burdens on the director—intensive media scrutiny, accusations of racism, the temporary editorship of *Spin*—but through it all he has taken it upon himself to defend the interests of those who wish to follow in his footsteps. So when Lee paid a visit to one young black filmmaker not long ago, osten-



Spike

Vive Kuwait! Liberation, 1944 vs. 1991

The Liberation of Paris, 1944: Valiant American and British troops risk lives to rescue arrogant anti-Semitic country that was overrun in days

The Liberation of Kuwait City, 1991: Valiant American and British troops risk lives to rescue arrogant anti-Semitic country that was overrun in days

1944: Token native force enters city ahead of troops that do most of real work; French troops play minor role

1991: Token native force enters city ahead of troops that do most of real work; French troops play minor role

1944: Allied forces commanded by balding German-American with political potential

1991: Allied forces commanded by balding German-American with political potential

1944: GIs are met with kisses from happy, rosy-cheeked French women

1991: GIs are met with kisses from happy, stubble-cheeked Iraqi EPWs

1944: "La Marseillaise" brings tears to eyes

1991: Ululations of joyous Kuwaiti women bring hands to ears



Paris, 1944

Kuwait City, 1991

1944: Brutal occupation force exercises good taste in sparing architectural treasures like the cathedral of Notre Dame

1991: Brutal occupation force exercises good taste in razing architectural nightmares like the emir's palace

1944: Battle-weary troops seeking R&R repair to Left Bank, watch dancers at Le Moulin Rouge

1991: Battle-weary troops seeking R&R repair to berm, watch scorpions mate

—Michael Hainey and Josh Gillette

The Fine Print

by Jamie Malanowski



"To War! To War! The Country's Gone to War!..."

What will we tell our grandchildren when called upon to describe the deprivations we suffered in the Gulf War? We didn't have any scrap-metal drives or meat rationing, and nobody put up black-out curtains. And we'll be reluctant to bring up the yellow ribbons and how they made us think about Tony Orlando all the time. But we will be able to recall, poignantly, the many disruptions that were en-

dured, allowing those of us State-side to say, *We also serve who only sit and reschedule.* Here are just a few of the cancellations:

The Friars' roast of Ted Turner; the big PR campaign for *Sports Illustrated's* swimsuit issue; the overhead shots from the Goodyear blimp at the Super Bowl; the Giants' City Hall victory party; Oprah's party for 50 at Delia's restaurant in New York; the big party at London's Baltic Exchange for the debut of the British-advertising edition of *Vanity Fair*; Baroness Rothschild's dinner-dance at the Roxy; watercolorist Dong Kingman's two-month tour of the Far East; the press junket to the London premiere of *Green Card*; ►

Topsy-turvy



The Making of the President, 1988 and 1992.

Illustration by Steve Brodner

Ronaldus Shamask's fall menswear show; and Valentino's 30th-anniversary celebration.



"Sing Hi-De, Hi-De, Hi-De, Hi-De, Hi-De, Hi-De, Hi-De-Ho!"

War, as Crane, Hemingway and others have pointed out, creates moments during which fundamental truths are revealed. Some recent McLaughlin Group transcripts reveal the essential truth about the state of punditry in America.

January 12: "If Iraq attacks Israel," said reporter Jack Germond, "the Syrians and the Jordanians will turn on Israel as well." Host John McLaughlin predicted that Hussein's withdrawal of his troops from Kuwait would begin on "January the seventeenth or the eighteenth."

January 18: The panel predicted the war's duration. "I don't think more than two weeks from Day One....By next time we meet...you could have some kind of cease-fire or maybe they'll just be shattered," said Patrick Buchanan (meaning the war could end as early as January 25). *The New Republic's* Morton Kondracke figured 13 days (January 29); his colleague Fred Barnes made it two weeks (January 30); McLaughlin and Germond weighed in with a conservative three weeks (February 5).

January 25: Kondracke moved back to three weeks (February 15). "It will last less than a month," said Buchanan (February 24 or so). Barnes, who in one week extended his ▶

Do As I Say, Not As I Did **Meet the Heroes of the Fighting 102nd—Congress**

During the Persian Gulf War, many of the country's leaders—George Bush, James Baker and Colin Powell among them—knew firsthand the risks of military service. Others—most prominently Dick Cheney, John Sununu and Dan Quayle—did not. When Congress debated the war, there were 17 senators and 129 representatives who supported the president and who themselves had never served in any branch of the service, including many who were of service age during the Vietnam War. We decided to review the *Congressional Record* to find out what some of those who favored war but had never gone themselves had to say about committing troops.



Representative Jim Leach (R-Iowa)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment, then got a medical deferment for an arthritic condition

His comments: "On questions of war and peace there is a societal imperative for caution, but it must be understood that ambivalence is not synonymous with statesmanship and that anxietyship is no substitute for leadership."

Representative Fred Grandy (R-Iowa)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a high lottery number

His comments: "In the chow line at the base we were visiting...when I asked [a young woman] what she wanted, she said, 'I don't want to go to war.' I said, 'Neither do I. That is why I am here.'"

Representative Jim McGrery (R-La.)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment

His comments: "Yes, Americans are a peace-loving people, and yes, Americans abhor war and its ugly consequences, but Americans have never been afraid of a fight and recognize that there are times when we must fight."

Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment until classified 1-Y (medical, mental or moral deficiency; can serve only during an emergency)

His comments: "Is this what will bring about a more peaceful world? An emasculated president, an America unable to take a stand?...Words are not enough."

Representative Jerry Huckaby (D-La.)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment

His comments: "To those we ask to sacrifice, we honor you."

Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment

His comments: "It is no easy thing to look into the eyes of men and women who are marching off to the drumbeat of war."

Representative Bob McEwen (R-Ohio)

What he did during the Vietnam War: had a student deferment

His comments: "Last night my daughter asked the question as postulated by her fourth-grade teacher: Will your father vote for war or peace? As I looked into the face of that little life that I value more than my own, I thought how simple it is when a person knows no history, when they have no memory, when they see no consequences, when a person lives only for today."

—Aimée Bell, Josh Gillette and Jonathan Napack

Stomachs of the World Unite

RECESSION

PRIX FIXE DINNERS



recession timeline:

'91

'81

'74

'69

'61

'57

\$16⁹⁵

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projection by five weeks, came in around March 8. Germond sort of agreed: "At least six weeks and probably longer." McLaughlin padded his estimate by two months: "We'll be out of it...some-time between April 1 and June 1."

February 1: Barnes stuck with March 8. Arnaud de Borchgrave, editor of *The Washington Times*, safely guessed a ground offensive would start before the end of February and the war would end before March 17. Kondracke picked late February, and McLaughlin, again optimistic, chose March 1, both of which were close enough to be called accurate. Unfortunately, two weeks later McLaughlin joined Barnes in predicting there would be no ground war.



Just What Do Barbara Eden and Sam Kinison Have in Common?

When it comes time for a TV executive to judge a celebrity's popularity, one of the more widely read runes at his or her disposal is the celebrity's Q score. Developed in 1964 by Marketing Evaluation Inc., of Port Washington, New York, a Q score is a one-number distillation of how well the public knows and likes someone. New Q scores are issued every July and are supposed to be highly confidential—though for \$19,800 one can obtain the entire list. For the price of this issue of *SPY*, one can get the Q scores of the following 144 people who ►

Naked City

Writing on Deadline, With the Meter Running: A Recent Anthology

"On the day before the war started, I was being driven from Jerusalem to Ben-Gurion International Airport, outside Tel Aviv. My **driver** was named Tony... 'Mr. Richard,' he said as we drove through Jerusalem's nearly empty streets, 'you are lucky you are leaving. The situation here is terrible.'... In New York, a **taxi driver** warned me not to take the shuttle to Washington."—Richard Cohen, Washington Post Writers Group, February 18, 1991

"American **Cab Co.** driver Said Abtion, from Somalia, gave this advice to passenger George Creel: 'I think the Georgia Tech football team should take the Falcons' uniforms and play in the NFL and fire those other guys.'" —Norman Arey and Martha Woodham, *Atlanta Constitution*, February 3, 1991

"A **bus driver** in San Francisco hung a black origami dove from his dashboard. In New York, a **cabdriver** removed a snapshot of his son, a soldier, because, he said, 'I can't bear to be reminded.'" —Alessandra Stanley, *The New York Times*, January 16, 1991



"A Baghdad engineer has begun driving **taxis** at night to earn enough money to stockpile food.... Puttering along in his cousin's dilapidated cab, he quickly confesses: 'I am weeping inside....'" —Tony Horwitz and Geraldine Brooks, *The Wall Street Journal*, January 1, 1991

"On the [Baghdad] radio, **cab drivers**

seem to favor Arabic rock...."—Carl Bernstein, *Time*, October 8, 1990

"'You haven't been [to the USSR] in eighteen months?' the **cabby** who took us from the airport had asked a few minutes into the trip. 'Well, nothing's changed except there's less and less to eat.'" —Francine du Plessix Gray, *Mirabella*, October 1990

"'You mean *El Escombrillo* (from *escombro*, rubble),' the [Panamanian] **taxi driver** had joked when I'd asked him to take me to El Chorrillo. He wasn't joking when he warned that I might be mugged.'" —Francisco Goldman, *Harper's*, September 1990

"[The campaign signs said,] 'Everything will be better.' My **taxi driver** seemed to think so, but not if the Sandinistas win." —Francisco Goldman, *Harper's*, February 1990

"Then, on February 29th, Iraq fired Soviet-made Scud-B missiles at Teheran. 'At first, we thought they were bombing us,' a **cabbie** recalled. 'So did the military.'" —Robin Wright, *The New Yorker*, September 5, 1988

"The **cabdrivers**, as antic as the carnival hustlers in *Petrushka*, voice their spiels in heavily accented English, promising the dream of heaven (fur hat? nightclub? pretty girl?)."—Lewis Lapham, *Harper's Notebook*, July 1988

"I was given the best description of the revolution's idyllic nature by a **taxi-driver** in Managua...."—Judith Thurman, *The New Yorker*, March 14, 1988

"Almost every Berliner's emotional survival kit includes a wisecracking sense of humor.... An American, returning to Berlin after 60 years, asks his **taxi driver** to run down the events during his absence. Responds the driver: 'The Nazis came, the war came, the Russians came. You didn't miss much.'" —Jill Smolowe, *Time*, August 18, 1986 —Chip Rowe

The Clap, and How to Get It

What Warrants Applause on Arsenio



Anyone who watches late-night television knows that the noxious pandering for applause apparent on most talk shows ("Who here's from Cleveland?") has reached new heights with *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Indeed, Hall and his guests are so regularly interrupted by applause that the program is less a talk show than a celebrity-driven public-opinion forum from which, by measuring the duration of each burst of applause, one can discover America's true feelings.

—Peter Carlin and Adam Platt

2.71 seconds

Ron Silver says favorite basketball team is New York Knicks

4.14*

Arsenio says Barbra Streisand is a bitch

4.32

Jean-Claude Van Damme says he would beat Steven Seagal in a fight

4.45

Arsenio mentions *Bonfire of the Vanities* ad, praises Melanie Griffith's body

5.72

Arsenio tells Ryan O'Neal he covets Farrah Fawcett

5.98

Sinbad says doing the bump is easier with a "big-butt woman"

6.06

Arsenio says someone should "tie up Saddam and slap him into a coma"

7.17*

Arsenio says men with back hair shouldn't wear tank tops

7.23*

Arsenio says he would enjoy "knocking boots" with Jasmine Guy

7.44*

Iggy Pop says he enjoys sex

7.69

After Arnold Schwarzenegger silences audience with an authoritative whistle, Arsenio says Bush should get a whistle, kick some ass

7.76

Arsenio shows photo of *L.A. Law*'s Alan Rachins in drag

8.38

Dr. Ruth says she has good sex with her husband even though they sleep in separate beds

8.88*

Arsenio observes that you'd never catch a black person singing show tunes

9.31*

Arsenio notes that E. W. De Klerk's son is dating a black woman

10.80*

Arsenio says he'd hate to run relay in nude Olympics

12.74*

Arsenio observes that Haiti's new president resembles M.C. Hammer

15.89*

Arsenio impersonates his uncle eating grits

19.39*

Schwarzenegger silences audience with whistle

*Applause was accompanied by barking.

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

were recently evaluated (note: the average score is 18):

Bill Cosby and Michael Jordan (53); Steven Spielberg (45); Michael J. Fox (41); Park Overall (40); Richard Moll (36); Keenan Ivory Wayans (34); Chevy Chase and Tom Cruise (33); Joe Montana (32); Alex Trebek (31); Tony Danza and M.C. Hammer (30);

Arsenio Hall, Leonard Nimoy and Meryl Streep (29); Bruce Willis (28); Vicki Lawrence (27); Jane Pauley and Oprah Winfrey (26); Erma Bombeck, Larry Drake, "Bobcat" Goldthwait, Elle MacPherson, Dan Rather and Mike Wallace (25); Roseanne Barr, Peter Jennings, Ted Koppel and Sinbad (24); Christina Applegate and Tom Brokaw (23); Steve Doocy, Victoria Jackson, Kristy McNichol and Mary Tyler Moore (22); Connie Chung, William Hurt, Sarah Jessica Parker and the Judds (21);

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Johnny Carson, Barbara Eden, Alice Ghostley, Sam Kinison, C. Everett Koop, Sophia Loren, Bill Moyers, Nia Peeples, Al Roker and New Kids on the Block (20); Linda Evans, Donna Karan, David Letterman, Martha Quinn and Tony Randall (19); Jim Belushi, Cher, Patrick Duffy, Corey Haim, Joe Piscopo, Sally Jessy Raphaël and Toukie Smith (18); Shirley MacLaine, Frank Viola and Chuck Woolery (17);

Nell Carter, Lorenzo Lamas, Chris Sabo, Pat Sajak and Patricia Wettig (16); Timothy Busfield, Rick Dees, Leeza ▶

Gibbons, Madonna, Jerry Orbach, Diane Sawyer and George Will (15); Ben Gazzara, Ralph Macchio and Jerry Van Dyke (14); Shelley Fabares, Frances Lear, David Mamet, Ed McMahon, Maria Shriver, Rusty Staub, Ted Turner and the B-52s (13); Jerry Garcia, Graham Kerr, Ann Magnuson, Tim McCarver, Geraldo Rivera, Peter Scolari, Paul Shaffer, Brooke Shields, Joel Siegel, Suzanne Somers, Donald Trump and Dick Van Patten (12); Polly Bergen, Jeff Greenfield, Joan Rivers, Pete Rose, Isabella Rossellini and Gene Shalit (11);

Kevin Bacon, Crystal Bernard, Sandra Bernhard, Morton Dean, Polly Draper, Greg Gumbel, Jerry Hall, Brit Hume, Tim Matheson, Tony Roberts, Pierre Salinger and Ron Silver (10); Roger Ebert, Bryant Gumbel, George Hamilton, Ron Reagan, Gene Siskel, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Uma Thurman and Tuesday Weld (9); Dr. Joyce Brothers, Deborah Norville and Martha Stewart (8); Ed Begley Jr., Dick Cavett, Spalding Gray, Sally Kirkland and Chuck Scarborough (7); Morton Downey Jr. and Stéphanie Grimaldi (6); Cyndy Garvey and George Steinbrenner (5); Stephen Aug, Roger Caras and Zsa Zsa Gabor (4); Bess Armstrong (3); and Leona Helmsley (2). ☹

Naked City

1 The first day of National Egg Month, as sanctioned by the American Egg Board. Time to try out Eggboy, the anodized-aluminum egg cup imported by S. C. Powers & Associates of



Grand Rapids. "Eggboy is eggs-citing," reads the press release. "It is eggsactly what you need at the breakfast table." **4** Victor Borge appears at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, the

Enchanting and Alarming Events Upcoming

Bronx. Hundreds of spectators, having confused Borge with Señor Wences, demand that he bring out "the little hand-face guy."

16 "No Jokin': Rap, Rappers, and the Literary Arts," part of the West Side YMCA's Writer's Voice series. Featuring a journalist who writes about rap, a professor who teaches a course on rap and, pending availability, members of Club 12, a group that performs a rap *Twelfth Night*. All this for \$8, or \$1 more than the series's organizers charged for the largely nonrhyming

reading performed two months ago by five SPY writers.

18 Amid National Egg Month, the town of Austin, Minnesota—home of the 100-year-old Geo. A. Hormel & Company—throws an all-day Spam Luncheon Meat Jamboree.

19 A sad casualty of Dinkinonomics: the Staten Island Historical Society's Victorian Ladies Fancy Fair, a showcase, says crestfallen coordinator Robin Womer, of "fancy little boxes, doilies, punched paper, trivets—lots of labor-



intensive gew-gaws," was to have been held today. Alas, budget and staff cutbacks necessitated cancellation, leaving orphaned *Wigwag* subscribers even more in the lurch.

23 "Growing Up With DNA," a lecture by James Watson; Museum of Natural History. A bittersweet remembrance, we assume, accompanied by Simon & Garfunkel's "Bookends Theme" and flickery Super 8 footage of the Nobelist making s'mores and romping through a lawn sprinkler with Francis Crick.

27 Memorial Day, and the fifth-to-last day of National Egg Month; appropriately, the folks in Austin, Minnesota, hold a dedication ceremony at the grave of founder George A. Hormel, a man responsible for many, many of the American lives lost to salty, processed foods. ☹



Blurb-o-Mat Capsule Movie Reviews by Walter Monheit™, the Movie Publicist's Friend

HUDSON HAWK, starring Bruce Willis, James Coburn (Tri-Star) ☹☹☹
Walter Monheit says, "George Bush and Colin Powell, get out of that Oh!-val Office while that bald-eagle birdie named Bruce makes the big screen safe for democracy—with *bicepartisan* support from Coburn! What a tweet!"

SHAKE IT UP, starring John Travolta (Universal) ☹☹☹
Walter Monheit says, "Ladies, better nail down the *sighsmograph*! Travolta takes *epicenter* stage with a feverish performance that's *shudderly tremendous*!"

A KISS BEFORE DYING, starring Matt Dillon, Sean Young (Universal) ☹☹☹
Walter Monheit says, "A Kiss from Sean—*ooof!* What a way to go! Call the mortuary—I'm a-comin', and so's Oscar!"

What the monacles mean: ☹☹☹—excellent; ☹☹☹☹—indisputably a classic



D.C. Comics

QUAYLE ALONE

by Jamie Malanowski

One day in the White House...

Zzz...mmh...I wish they'd all just go away...mmh...Hey! Where is everybody?!?!?

OH, NO! I made the whole administration disappear!

All ri-i-ight!

Hey, Gorbby! Is your refrigerator ru-what the...!?!?

OH, NO!

Aaargh!

We're so happy you're okay!
We'll never leave you alone again!

The End

What Goes Up Must Come Down

Saying Yippee! the Automatic-Weapons Way

Celebration. We might pop a cork or flash a confident thumbs-up sign, but in the Middle East, the way to really celebrate is to throw your head back and fire your Kalashnikov or M-16 toward the heavens. We are all now familiar with the images of hirsute, smiling men shooting automatic weapons into the air in Baghdad and Kuwait City. It is in the nature of such merrymaking not to think about tomorrow, but we got to wondering, What happens to the bullets?

"They kill people," says Michael Zirmo, of Zirmo Company, New York City gun brokers. "It's the law of physics: What goes up must come down."

Detective Steven Fiorica of the New York Police Department's ballistics division told us he wouldn't want to be standing under a "descending projectile. It's like the old saying, 'What goes up must come down.'" So what happens to the bullets? "Basically, they come right back down the same way they went up."

At least Gulf War celebrants need not worry about being hit by

their *own* bullets. It's almost impossible to fire your bullet straight up, and even then it's unlikely that it will return to the exact spot from which it was launched. The chances of being struck by someone *else's* bullet, on the other hand, are pretty good—especially for those a few blocks away who may be

engaging in a less martial form of revelry. (Indeed, the Kuwaitis have reported that a couple of dozen people have died from falling slugs.)

The average bullet leaves the barrel of an automatic weapon at a speed of 2,000 to 3,000 feet per second. On its downward path, the bullet's acceleration is 32 feet per second squared. Gravity speeds its descent, but the increasing speed causes an increase in aerodynamic drag, and the bullet will return to earth at a speed lower than that at which it left.

But all this seems a tad too theoretical: we were yearning for more empirical data. Ed Klecka of the NRA (who also pointed out that "what goes up must come down") acquainted us with some studies done by the Army in Florida in 1919 and '20. One study found that on a clear, calm Florida day (and Kuwait City is the Miami Beach of the Gulf), a pointed 180-grain sporting bullet, fired vertically from a .30-'06 rifle at 2,700 feet per second, would ascend to 10,000 feet in about 21 seconds and, if it fell base-first, return to earth 37 seconds later at a speed of 323 feet per second. If the slug tumbled as it fell, as nearly all shots must, it would return to earth at 180 feet per second—perhaps not lethal, but faster than a Nolan Ryan



fastball.

For a firsthand explanation of what happens when a bullet fired in joy returns with less festive consequences, we spoke with Peter Schweitzer, CBS News's Rome bureau chief. In 1982, Schweitzer was covering the forced withdrawal of the PLO in Lebanon when

retreating Palestinian soldiers were promiscuously firing their machine guns into the air: "I was with a camera crew on a street corner when all of a sudden I felt what seemed like a lead frying pan hitting me on my head. Blood was pouring down my face. We went to a local hospital, where they shaved my hair and scraped some lead from my skull." Schweitzer says the doctor surmised that the bullet must have ricocheted off a building before it hit him; otherwise, he would have been killed.

We well know that this colorful custom—call it *overfriendly* fire—is not unique to the Middle East. Latin American freedom fighters also fire their weapons skyward. But the practice seems to particularly flourish in the Levant, so we asked Mohammad Al-Awadhi, a Washington spokesman for Citizens for a Free Kuwait, about it. Al-Awadhi did not like the insinuation that Kuwaitis were fostering this dangerous form of jollification. "The Kuwaitis are not a fighting people," he said firmly. "It's *the Palestinian factions* who tend to do it. People of the peninsula usually danced with traditional swords. You'll see," he added. "When order is restored, there will be dances with swords on television." —Richard Stengel

What's in a Name?

Our Periodic Anagram Analysis

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

OH, A SINISTER PETROL DEED

PRESIDENT HUSSEIN

PUNISHES IN DESERT

PRESIDENT VIOLETA CHAMORRO

MATRIARCH OPEN TO EVILDOERS

PENNY MARSHALL

HARM LENNY'S PAL

—Andy Aaron

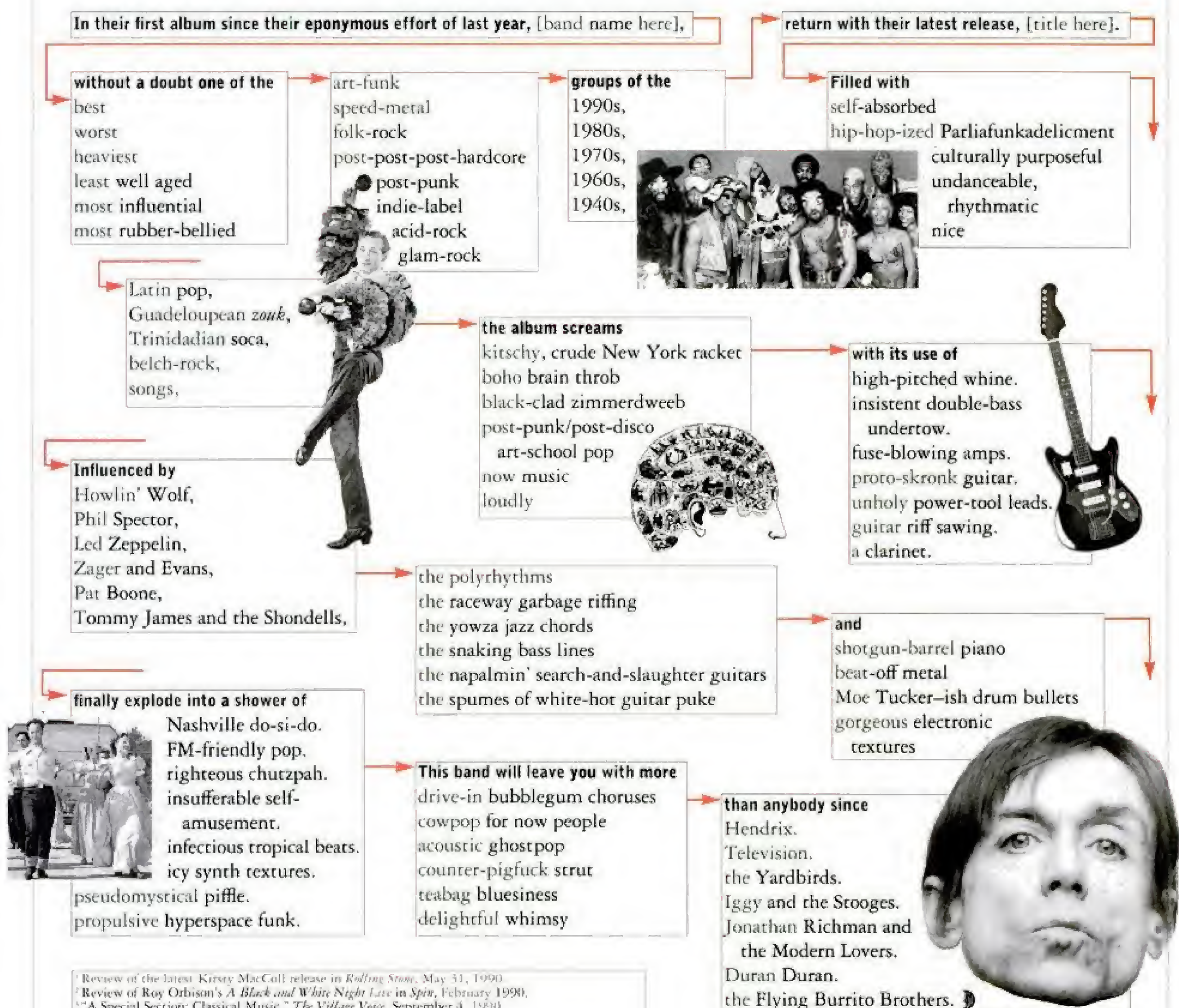
That's the Way (Uh-huh, Uh-huh) I Like It

Introducing SPY's Rock-Critic-o-Matic

If you're like most people, your dream job is that of a rock critic for a major publication. You get to receive free records, wear a Walkman in the office and produce prose that need be only vaguely comprehensible. Now, thanks to SPY's Rock-Critic-o-Matic, this is no longer an unattainable fantasy. Simply by selecting one phrase from each group—*phrases that have, for the most part, appeared in actual rock reviews!*—you can write like a real critic. For example, here is a Rock-Critic-o-Matic-generated review of a group we have invented: **In their first album since**

their eponymous effort of last year, *Donald and the Vulgarians*, without a doubt one of the best¹ post-punk² groups of the 1980s,³ return with their latest release, *I Who Have Nothing and Other Songs for the Nineties*. Filled with self-absorbed⁴ Trinidadian soca,⁵ the album screams post-punk/post-disco art-school pop⁶ with its use of guitar riff sawing.⁷...

As you can see, producing criticism that is virtually indistinguishable from that found in *Rolling Stone*, *Spin* and *The Village Voice* is now as easy as connecting one, two, three!
—David Bourgeois



¹ Review of the latest Kirsty MacColl release in *Rolling Stone*, May 31, 1990.

² Review of Roy Orbison's *A Black and White Night Live* in *Spin*, February 1990.

³ "A Special Section: Classical Music," *The Village Voice*, September 4, 1990.

⁴ Review of Chris Isaak's *Heart Shaped World* in *Spin*, August 1989.

⁵ Review of the latest Wilfrido Vargas release in *Spin*, August 1989.

⁶ Review of the latest Robert Plant release in *Spin*, August 1989.

⁷ Review of the latest Beats International release in *Spin*, July 1990.

Separated at Birth?



General Norman
Schwarzkopf...



and Jonathan
Winters?



Lucie Arnaz...



and social climber
Georgette Moshbacher?



Heiress
Doris Duke...



and Eric Stoltz
in *Mask*?



Designer
Christian Lacroix...



and Basia Johnson?



Diane Sawyer...



and Gena Rowlands?

Naked City

A Brief History of Television

Part I: "The Old Flame Rekindled"

November 25, 1965

BEWITCHED (ABC) Aunt Clara becomes anxious over the sudden appearance of her old flame.

November 7, 1966

ANDY GRIFFITH (CBS) Helen becomes jealous over the sudden appearance of Andy's old flame.

January 31, 1970

MY THREE SONS (CBS) Barbara becomes jealous over the sudden appearance of Steve's old flame.

October 3, 1970

MY THREE SONS (CBS) Barbara becomes nervous over the imminent appearance of her old flame.

March 26, 1971

THE BRADY BUNCH (ABC) Sam the butcher becomes jealous over the recurring appearances of Alice's old flame.

October 30, 1971

THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW (CBS) Mary becomes wistful after the surprise appearance of her old flame.

February 10, 1973

ALL IN THE FAMILY (CBS) Archie becomes jealous over the possible appearance of Edith's old flame.

October 14, 1974

MAUDE (CBS) Maude becomes dreamy over the possible appearance of her old flame.

March 7, 1977

THE JEFFERSONS (CBS) George becomes nervous over the unexpected appearance of his old flame.

November 29, 1977

THREE'S COMPANY (ABC) Janet becomes irritated by the appearance of her old flame.

March 30, 1983

TAXI (ABC) Alex becomes smitten after the sudden appearance of Jim's old flame.

December 5, 1988

MURPHY BROWN (CBS) Murphy becomes anxious over a professional appearance with her old flame.

November 2, 1990

EVENING SHADE (CBS) Wood refuses to become jealous over the appearance of Ava's old flame.

November 14, 1990

DEAR JOHN (NBC) John becomes nostalgic over the possible appearance of his old flame.

November 16, 1990

FULL HOUSE (ABC) Jesse becomes introspective after the appearance of his old flame.

—Joseph Malgarini



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Don't you love L.A.?



The sunshine, the fresh food,

the movie stars, the laid-back tempo, the brutal police beating

that horrified a nation? You've seen the video, now meet

Daryl Gates, commandant of

The Gazpacho Gestapo

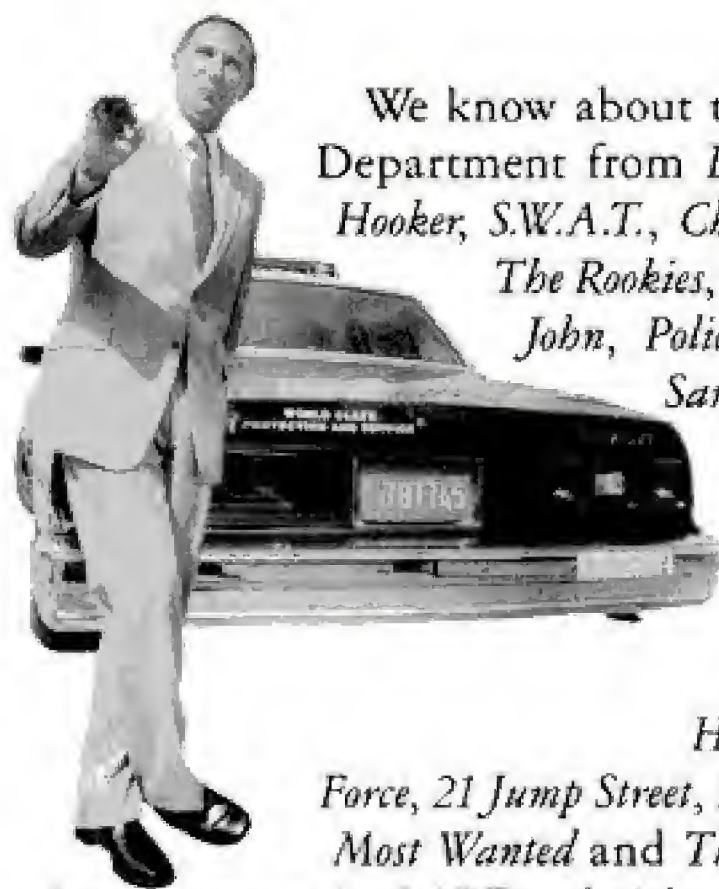
LATE AT NIGHT IN THE WHITE DISTRICTS OF A CERTAIN CITY THAT IS not Johannesburg, only the soothing gurgle of pool filters and the scrape of palm fronds in the breeze disturb the silence. A white police sergeant guides his patrol car late one night through just such a neighborhood high in the hills; the high-beams make moving shadows of wax-leaved bushes against stucco walls. "It's so quiet up here that we don't even bother to patrol," the sergeant says. He takes the car down along the steep and winding road. At each turn the valley below appears and reappears, and with its clusters and strings of lights it resembles a starry sky, only brighter. Now reaching the foot of the hills, the sergeant sees what the white homeowners miss when they enjoy their twinkling nighttime prospect: filth, barbed wire, rubbled brick, noisy groups of black men and women, ill-clad children who stare hard at the white policeman in his car. Here the sergeant will have work to do.

The police in this city that is not Johannesburg use dum dum bullets—special hollow-tipped, flesh-ripping ammunition banned for use in war by the Geneva Conventions. If the police see a black man walking in the white neighborhoods of this city, they will question him. The police relentlessly arrest poor young men for crimes like spitting and loitering. Some claim that in this city, brutal beatings of blacks by white policemen occur every day.

No, this city is not Johannesburg, but we can give you a hint: not long ago, scores of police in this city undertook a huge raid in which they used crowbars and sledgehammers to smash through several homes; the police made many arrests, and as they marched their captives into the station house they forced them to whistle the theme song from *The Andy Griffith Show*.

That's right, the city is Los Angeles.

by Michael Hainey



We know about the Los Angeles Police Department from *Dragnet*, *Adam-12*, *T. J. Hooker*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Chopper One*, *Mod Squad*, *The Rookies*, *Get Christy Love*, *Jigsaw John*, *Police Story*, *Police Woman*, *Sam*, *B.A.D. Cats*, *The Blue Knight*, *Blue Thunder*, *Burke's Law*, *David Cassidy*—*Man Undercover*, *Felony Squad*, *Renegades*, *Starsky and Hutch*, *Hunter*, *Strike Force*, *21 Jump Street*, *Dear Detective*, *Columbo*, *Most Wanted* and *The New Breed*. All these

shows present the LAPD as brisk, efficient, the best. How ironic, then, that television, which has portrayed the L.A. police so respectfully, should also be the LAPD's downfall. A *Newsweek* poll in March indicated that 77 percent of the American public were aware of the videotape of three white L.A. policemen beating and kicking Rodney King while about 20 white police watched passively. The violence of the officers as they swung their nightsticks at a defenseless man lying on the ground was disgusting. Less apparent to viewers, however, was the effect of the Taser stun gun that a sergeant used on King—it delivers 50,000 volts of electricity. The police claim they stopped King because

Gates, whose own son has had a narcotics problem, told a congressional subcommittee that casual drug users "ought to be shot"

he was driving 115 mph in his Hyundai—a car that, according to its manufacturer, might reach 100 under optimal test conditions. (King says he was going 40 or 45.)

As revolting as the King incident was, it should not really surprise anyone. Daryl Gates, the Los Angeles chief of police, has, of course, made wildly insensitive racial remarks: Blacks die in chokeholds because they are not "normal." Hispanics are "lazy." Even though his own son has had problems with narcotics abuse, Gates has said that "casual drug users ought to be taken out and shot." Unfortunately, Gates is more than just a loudmouth. The aggressiveness and intolerance reflected in his comments also seem to be embedded in the department he heads—the most militarized police department in the country, with 8,300 officers and an annual budget of nearly \$1 billion.

Consider the following: The LAPD paid out \$35 million in personal damages for police misconduct from 1973 to 1990; it paid \$8 million in 1990 alone. Two weeks before the King incident, a jury awarded \$540,000 to Baseball Hall of Fame member Joe Morgan for being roughed up by police at the Los Angeles airport. Around the same time, Jamaal Wilkes, the former Lakers basketball star who is now a businessman active in philanthropy, revealed that the police had hauled him from his car and handcuffed him. The police said they'd stopped

Wilkes because his license-plate light was out (Wilkes denies this). In 1990 the number of officer-involved shootings in Los Angeles was 160; in New York, a city more than twice the size of L.A., officer-involved shootings numbered 67 the same year. The executive director of the Police Misconduct Referral Service estimates that there might be 6,000 cases of police abuse in L.A. each year. In June 1990 about 150 mostly Hispanic janitors were striking at the Century City complex (the building that provided the setting for *Die Hard*). They held a demonstration and then planned to walk through the complex. But as they approached, according to a union lawyer, a line of cops met them and told them they could not proceed. The strikers sat in the street, and the cops allegedly clubbed them and continued to beat them as they fled.

The King incident was not an exception. The LAPD was a disaster waiting to happen. But how did the force get to this point? Where did Daryl Gates come from, and why is he still in power?

IN L.A.'S SOUTHWEST DIVISION, COVERING THE PREDOMINANTLY black and Hispanic neighborhoods near Watts, FTL has been spray-painted on walls, garages, buildings, stop signs, sidewalks. "It stands for 'Fuck the law,'" says Sergeant Kris Davis, a ten-year veteran of the LAPD, as he shines his spotlight on another graffito. "You get used to it after a while." Tall and powerfully built, his receding hair in a crew cut, Davis looks like a Gemini astronaut. He is sergeant for the four-to-midnight shift.

When a call comes over the radio—"Shots fired, man down"—Davis turns on the flashing roof lights of his Ford LTD Crown Victoria squad car and within two minutes joins five other patrol cars. A lean black teenager clothed only in white underwear and white athletic socks lies facedown on the sidewalk with an oxygen mask strapped to his head. His blue jeans and shirt are in a clump on the grass where the paramedic flung them after slicing them off. A barefoot child stares at the pool of dark blood slowly growing on the sidewalk. Torn paper debris from pads and needles and sponges lies crumpled in the blood. Davis walks over and shines his flashlight on the youth as a second paramedic, wearing, like the first, an orange jumpsuit and latex gloves, half rolls him on his side and depresses the area around the dark, pen-size wound near his kidney, where a .38-caliber bullet punched into his smooth skin.

Davis leans over the youth. "Can you hear me? Do you know who shot you? Huh? Who shot you, son?" he asks. Still flat on his chest, his arms spread at 45-degree angles, the kid manages only to flip his hands at the wrist like little fins to signal, "I don't know."

"We're not enforcing the law here anymore," says Davis as he drives away. "We're just barely holding on."

DARYL GATES (WHO DECLINED SEVERAL REQUESTS TO BE interviewed for this story) would probably not like to admit that his police force is "barely holding on." At the same time, the threats of gang war and drug violence are just what saved him and his cowboy-S.S. style from ob-

solescence and appeared to justify the kinds of policies that led to the King incident. When Gates became police chief in the late 1970s, he seemed a relic. But then violence in L.A., and in other big cities, dramatically worsened. Suddenly the citizenry found it had just what it wanted in its police chief. Gates represented a time when clean-cut Anglo-Saxon short-hairs cruised quiet, palm-lined neighborhoods and enforced the law swiftly and confidently, an era when the spectacle of police barely holding on was unimaginable.

For the first half of this century, the L.A. police were among the sleaziest in the nation, freelance leg breakers and flunkies who sold themselves as union-busting goons.

a spick-and-span, Martin Milner-ish reputation by instituting a singular style of American policing. Infatuated with Marine Corps elitism, he responded to the earlier leniency, which had spawned corruption, by militarizing the department. The "proactive" style that Parker instituted — and that is still the rule today — combines the aggressive enforcement of laws with a reliance on expensive ordnance. The style has an attitude to go along with it — an attitude of suspicion and confrontation that is drilled into recruits from their first days as cadets. The Jamaal Wilkes incident is a perfect example of proactive policing. Defending the department, a police spokesman said at the time, "Officers traditionally use minor violations in areas



ROLE MODEL: *above*, police chatter, postbeating—"Oops"; "Big-time use of force"; "Oh, well....I'm sure the lizard didn't deserve it. Ha ha." *Below*, Gates looks on as a demonstrator is subdued.

(The janitors at Century City may not think much has changed.) Cops regularly shook down motorists for pay-offs; ex-cops once tried to set up their own protection racket for an illegal statewide gambling ring.

After World War II all that changed. To clean up the department, the City Council decided to isolate the chief from the influence of politicians. The council made the office of police chief a civil-service appointment; the chief would be named by a police commission that consisted of civilians appointed by the mayor. Like a Water Department meter reader or any other civil servant, the police chief could not be fired without an arduous civil-service trial.

William Parker, Gates's mentor, became chief in 1949, and he made this notorious department into a force with



of high crime to provide a legal basis for further inquiries." Parker also began the tradition of Jo'burg-style racial remarks. During the Watts riots of 1965, he went on television to say, "It is estimated that by 1970, 45 percent of the metropolitan area of Los Angeles will be Negro; if you want any protection for your home and family...you're

When the department got permission to use dum dum bullets, a police spokesman told the ACLU to "eat your hearts out"

going to have to get in and support a strong Police Department. If you don't do that, come 1970, God help you." Each of his successors has lived by Parker's credo of autocracy, militarism and racism. Parker had no better pupil than Daryl Gates.

Gates once said, "I never intended to be a dumb cop all my life." Born in 1926 in Glendale, a low-budget version of Pasadena, he grew up poor—the son of an alcoholic plumber and a Mormon mother who raised him and his two brothers in the church and worked 12-hour days to sustain the family through the Great Depression. Needing money, Gates entered the LAPD cadet program for \$290 a month. Then, at 23, and less than a year out of the academy, he was plucked from obscurity by an influential academy instructor to serve as Parker's driver and bodyguard. This was L.A.; it was his big break.

Gates's service with Parker hooked him on cop life. He soon got a reputation as a loner and a "squint"—an officer who actually studies for departmental promotion exams. During his trek through the ranks, Gates reportedly placed first on every exam he took. But while winning promotions like a good civil servant, Gates did not sit at a desk in a precinct house all day. He served almost six years as a regular street cop, busting mah-jongg games and tricking prostitutes into snitching on one another. His only injury occurred when a prostitute stabbed him in the head. He also staked out public rest rooms to nab rendezvousing homosexuals. "Gates was a damn good cop," says a policeman who came up with him.

As a street commander around the time of the Watts riots, Gates distinguished himself by keeping calm. A year before Parker's death in 1966, Gates had become one of only three men who realistically had Parker's job within their grasp. He was 39 years old. Although he sought the top job when Parker died, he was passed over. Gates bided his time as he watched the department go through three chiefs in 12 years.

On March 28, 1978, Gates was named L.A.'s 49th chief of police. Finally he was Staff One, the radio code name for the chief. Yet it was hardly the ideal time to take office. Vain, excessively self-confident and long accustomed to having complete control, he found himself



CARTOON CHARACTERS: top, a scene from *Das Polizeie Gymnasium VI: Der Chief*. Above, tonight's episode of *Chief: Kojak* (guest star Telly Savalas), on assignment in L.A., clashes with top cop Daryl Gates (Daryl Gates). Left, a newcomer to Fantasy Land, "Chief."

almost immediately on the defensive, battling to preserve a department under siege from the political left, from budget cuts required by Proposition 13, from meddling courts and minority-hiring suits and the media. In 1979 police shot eight rounds into a black woman holding a paring knife, then rolled her dead body over and handcuffed her. There were calls for Gates's resignation. A few years later he proposed his theory about why blacks were dying in chokeholds. It was a difficult period, and Gates admitted to a reporter that he was just about beat. Of course, in another city the chief might have been fired, but not in Los Angeles.

DARYL GATES'S PHILOSOPHY OF CRIME IS VERY SIMPLE: "Every newborn baby is a little savage," he says. His views on criminal punishment are just as simple. "I propose," he says, "that we find a place way out in the desert...and we send [criminals] to that location... You can put a mile of land mines all around [the] fence, and I can assure you no one's going to cross those land mines." (His attitude

toward white-collar crime may be different—he wrote to a judge in support of Michael Milken.)

Sergeant Davis also has a philosophy. "Crack just destroyed this place," he says, cruising around Lower Baldwin Hills, a mostly black project with one of the highest crime rates in the city. "And five minutes up the hill"—in the posh Baldwin Hills neighborhood—"you got the other extreme. It's Los Angeles. Am I discouraged by it? No. If I had gone into this job to give people justice, I would have quit a long time ago."

A nervous officer calls over the radio, "Shots fired.... Officers in pursuit, request immediate backup.... Repeat, immediate backup." Davis speeds through alleys. He arrives in four minutes; five minutes after that, 12 cars with lights flashing are in the area, two blocks are sealed off, and a Bell Jet Ranger police helicopter circles overhead while a canine officer awaits the word to turn his German shepherd loose. Running through yards and jumping fences and shrubs, two young officers search in vain for a man who emerged from a house and fired six rounds at their car. The Ranger continues to fly in a tight circle. Finally, after half an hour, the search is called off; Davis gathers his troops, and the helicopter cuts away.

After making sure that his men have the situation under control and the shooter cannot be found, Davis gets back in his car and returns to cruising the streets. "My first concern when I get on the scene is, *Is there a crime here?* Second, *Where are my men?* I get these hard-charging kids who are right out of the academy, and they think they are going to save the world. My peace of mind comes from investing time with the people I work with. I tell them you can't trust in this world or this system. It's faulty, and it will let you down every time."

GATES'S SIGNAL ACCOMPLISHMENT BEFORE BECOMING chief was developing the nation's first Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. His response to drugs and gangs is based on the same principle: maximum force. He bought French Aérospatiale helicopters with infrared spotting devices. He bought an armored personnel carrier and put a battering ram on it, then had his men drive it through the walls of suspected crack houses. (One of Sergeant Davis's men, at least, thinks the money is going to the wrong place. "They spend millions on all that shit like choppers and tanks," he says, "but us guys on the street have radios that are out-of-date by ten years. We can't even communicate with any of the surrounding communities to coordinate. It's a joke.")

Trouble came in June 1986. One night, a 55-year-old man named Jessie Larez was asleep in his house with his wife, five children and a seven-month-old grandchild. Seeking a murder weapon that was allegedly owned by Larez's son, the cops crashed in, threw Larez to the ground and broke his nose. Larez sued Gates and the department, and a jury found that the cops had used excessive force and had violated Larez's civil rights. The jury insisted that Gates pay the \$170,000 fine *personally*. It was a shocking precedent: the first time ever that a major American city's chief of police was found liable for acts committed

"Who Agents You, Mr. Schicklgruber?" It Can Happen Here

We can hardly blame Daryl Gates for his dictatorial rule, his militarism, his demagoguery and his funny way of combing his forelock. Something about Los Angeles just seems to breed rigidity and power-lust. Even the youth gangs are by far the most well organized, military and territorially ambitious of any in the country. A comparison of fascism and Los Angeles, in fact, reveals some disturbing correspondences. No doubt a failed and embittered screenwriter sits somewhere in Venice Beach and fantasizes about conquering the world. Let's hope somebody makes his movie.

FASCISM



eugenics
Riefenstahlian public events
the 1936 Olympics
book burning
oppressive uniformity
control over all aspects of society
personality cults
single-minded pursuit of power
physical fitness
propaganda
lower-middle-class resentment
partnership with Japan
shiny black boots
Prussia
Mussolini
Wagner
Speerian architecture
discipline
cultural insecurity vis-à-vis Paris
maniacal obsession with Lebensraum
small group of English adherents disloyal to their country and its traditions
the Axis powers
Arnold Schwarzenegger's father

L.A.



plastic surgery
the Rose Bowl parade
the 1984 Olympics
no books
the weather
Disneyland
Creative Artists Agency
Creative Artists Agency
physical fitness
publicists
skinheads
Sony, Matsushita
Pretty Woman
Orange County
Barry Diller
John Williams
City Hall
The Laker Girls
cultural insecurity vis-à-vis New York
maniacal obsession with living room
English movie colony
Axl Rose
Arnold Schwarzenegger



HEY, HEY: "Gates must stay." Gates was greeted at work one morning by an emotional crowd of supporters. "I will stay here, and I will fight any attempt to get rid of me," he said.

by his force that violated the Constitution.

Then came Operation Hammer, Gates's code name for his "war of attrition" on gangs. Launched three years ago, the operation called for 1,000 cops to sweep into south-central L.A. and arrest any suspected gang member. They brought in mainly young Hispanics and blacks, on the pettiest of charges. Backed by the same black community that had once hounded him but now wanted its streets back at any cost, Gates and his force were unstoppable. When the department got Police Commission approval to use dum-dum bullets, an LAPD spokesperson told the ACLU to "eat your hearts out."

Mayor Tom Bradley and the City Council voted to pay Gates's fine from city funds. Some argue now that such an endorsement allowed an even worse incident to take place: the 39th-and-Dalton raid. While a helicopter hovered overhead on an August evening in 1988, a task force of 88 cops stormed four apartments in two small buildings near the intersection of 39th Street and Dalton Avenue in south-central L.A. Acting on a tip, they were searching for drugs and suspects in a series of gang-related shootings. When the raid was over, the American Red Cross had to provide disaster relief for the residents. Holes were smashed into walls, toilet bowls were demolished, plumbing was ripped from the floor to set water gushing. To finish the destruction, the cops spray-painted LAPD RULES—their own version of FTL—nearby. Finally, when the residents were brought to the station for booking, the cops lined up to form a gauntlet and made the arrestees pass through it while allegedly beating them with fists and steel flashlights. Yes, the cops also made them whistle the music that accompanies Andy and Opie's walk to the fishing hole.

In the end, no gang members were found. No weapons were found. Only traces of cocaine and marijuana belonging to two nonresident teens were discovered. Gates acknowledged that the raid perhaps "got out of control." As expected, the chief shielded his men; only two cops resigned, and only 22 of the 88 cops were suspended,

none for more than 22 days. While the city managed to buy off almost all of the residents with \$3 million (about \$60,000 apiece) for damages, three residents refused to settle. They are suing the city in federal court and have named Gates and the Police Commission as defendants in addition to all of the cops who participated in the raid.

JUST AS GATES HAS SURVIVED ANY NUMBER OF QUESTIONABLE police shootings, just as he has survived his own mouth, just as he survived the Larez case and the 39th-and-Dalton raid, he has survived the national disgust over the King beating. A grand jury indicted four police officers involved in the incident. Treading a fine line between responding to public outrage and alienating the nation's police, the Justice Department announced it would "review" all federal police-brutality cases going back six years. Mayor Tom Bradley has not called on Gates to resign but has expressed his anger. Demonstrators have gathered to chant, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Daryl Gates has got to go!" Yet Gates remains chief of police. "I didn't invest 42 years of my life to go down the tubes over an incident I had nothing to do with," he has said. He is unrepentant—referring to the effect that broken bones, a fractured skull and possible brain damage might have on Rodney King, Gates said, "Perhaps this will be the vehicle to move him down the road to a good life." One would

"You can never get hard proof," says an insider, "but everyone knows that Gates has 'Hoover' smear files on every politician in this city"

think that the civil-service regulations would give Gates only so much protection.

Some knowledgeable people have a theory about why he has such an unshakable grip on power. From 1920 to 1983, the Police Department ran the Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID), a Red Squad that was originally organized as a private army for union-busting but eventually infiltrated and illegally spied on more than 200 activist organizations—left-wing terror groups like the World Council of Churches. The division worked unrestrained until 1976, when the Police Commission got tough for once, demanding that more than 50,000 PDID files be destroyed. In 1983, when 150 cartons of intact PDID files turned up in the garage and mobile home of a cop, the commission finally ordered the PDID to disband. It did—only to be reborn as the antiterrorism division. Gates denies that any files still exist, and on the record, local politicians will agree. Off the record, though, they admit that the files are a reason they are reluctant to challenge Gates. "You can never get hard proof," says an insider, "but everyone knows that Gates has 'Hoover' smear files on every politician in this city. That's why they can't touch him. The moment they might try, some embarrassing photos will mysteriously find their way to the papers."

If Only *Daryl Gates* Were Just a Summer Replacement

The LAPD has inspired dozens of TV shows and a precinctful of TV cops, all of whom are cut from more or less the same mold as Chief Daryl Gates. There are, however, a few vital differences.



ADAM-12, starring Martin Milner and Kent McCord
Wear tighter Jockey shorts than Gates



SAM, starring Mark Harmon and a dog
Less rabid than Gates



STARSKY AND HUTCH, starring David Soul and Paul Michael Glaser
Drive a more dy-no-mite car than Gates



DRAGNET, starring Jack Webb
More scrupulous about facts than Gates



THE BLUE KNIGHT, starring George Kennedy
Seems to know more about doughnuts than Gates



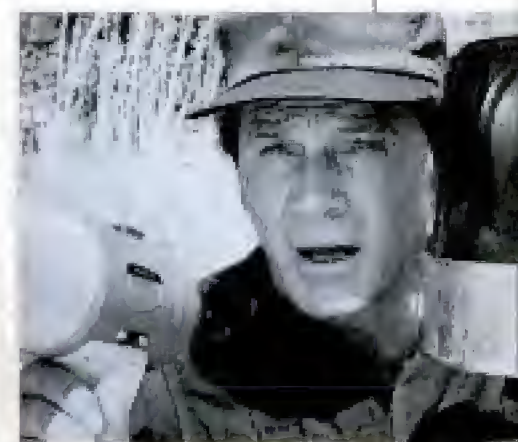
T. J. HOOKER, starring William Shatner
Less comfortable with his thinning hair than Gates



POLICE WOMAN, starring Angie Dickinson
Wears more mascara than Gates



MAN UNDERCOVER, starring David Cassidy
More likely to wake up in love than Gates



S.W.A.T., starring Steve Forrest
Gates-like in all important respects

ANOTHER SOURCE OF POWER FOR GATES IS HIS CONSTITUENCY. Three times in ten years, Bradley has tried to persuade voters to give him the power to dismiss department heads, the police chief among them. Each time, the voters have said no. Even though his own political ambitions have been thwarted (he has twice tested the waters for a mayoral run and ran for governor briefly in 1989), Gates still commands a lot of loyalty among people from the same sorts of low-budget Pasadenas that nurtured him. At the same time, the rich, powerful Hollywood liberal community has other fish to fry—mostly in the rain forests of Brazil, it would seem.

One afternoon a few weeks before Rodney King was stopped in his Hyundai, before he had any notion that crowds would be chanting for his ouster, Gates spoke to a group of civilian police-boosters—men in double-knit suits and ankle-zip boots; women in pastel pantsuits, smoking thin brown cigarettes—at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys. With his blue double-vent suit, powder-blue shirt and matching powder-blue pocket square, blue foulard tie and very shiny black shoes, Gates was ready for another show before another adoring audience.

"The LAPD is the finest force," he said. "Indeed, we are number one in the USA. But we must do whatever is necessary to deter those who would suppress us at home.

We are not just the first line of defense, ladies and gentlemen, we are the only line. But you can count on us. We will win this war."

Even Gates's most ardent supporters might begin to wonder about his effectiveness, however. Last year saw a record number of murders and robberies in L.A.; the city now trails only Miami and New York in the rate of violent crimes per capita. Gang membership in L.A. has doubled to 90,000 in the past five years. New York has just embarked on an ambitious neighborhood-patrol system, an old-fashioned beat-walking kind of policing projected to involve more than 17,000 officers—the antithesis of Gates's philosophy. Time will tell which method is more useful, but at the moment, for all the Police Department's weaponry and harshness, crime is no less prevalent in Los Angeles than in any other big city. And it's getting worse.

IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE? IT IS NEAR MIDNIGHT, AND Sergeant Davis's shift is almost over. He puts his hand to his temple and leans his arm against the door as he drives with one hand. "People in this city got no idea what's going on in the streets," he says. "And what's worse is, downtown has no idea. All we can do is keep a lid on things and pray every night that it doesn't go up." ☛

From time to time, diplomatic memoirs lift the veil that shrouds the conduct of foreign affairs, allowing us a glimpse into the ways that diplomats and nations deal with one another. One thinks of Dean Acheson's *Present at the Creation*. George Kennan's *Memoirs*. Henry Kissinger's *Years of Upheaval*. Now, in that grand tradition, comes

"At Your Service, President Bongo!"
former United States Information Service officer FRED SHAVER's

*A True Story of
Diplomacy and Lust
in the Heart of Africa*



RONALD REAGAN WAS PRESIDENT. AMERICA, FEELING GOOD ABOUT ITSELF AGAIN, WAS FLEXING ITS FOREIGN-policy muscles. But as I stood in front of the presidential palace in Libreville, the capital of the oil-rich equatorial-African country of Gabon, sweat trickled, then poured, down my face, my neck, my back, and into my shorts, proceeding groundward until even my socks were damp. It was, to say the least, hot.

There was another, more particular reason for my perspiration: I was nervous. I was meeting the president of Gabon for the first time, as one of two senior diplomatic aides attending the presentation of credentials of the new United States ambassador, Francis Terry McNamara, to His Excellency, El Hadj Omar Bongo. I had been the director of the United States Information Service (USIS) in Gabon for five months, and though I had never met Mr. Bongo, I knew enough about him and his pattern of indulgence that I could not say with any certainty what might happen in the next few minutes.

Especially as to what might emanate from the Gabonese presidential band, which was preparing to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" to accompany our entrance into the presidential palace. The bandmaster had called on me at the USIS to obtain the sheet music; after our meeting, I'd been told he had only recently been released from a

Gabonese prison, where he'd been sent by President Bongo to consider the error of his ways. His first mistake had occurred when the new British ambassador had presented his credentials and the band had played the Angolan national anthem: someone in this Francophone country had pulled the music out of the files and not noticed the difference between ANGLAISE and ANGOLAISE. That had been embarrassing enough, but not long after, when the president of South Korea had dropped by and been greeted with the North Korean anthem, Bongo had been mortified, and the bandmaster had got a month in the pokey. (There was considerable suspicion that his suffering in captivity was alleviated by a cash gift from the North Korean diplomatic delegation, either before or after the event, in appreciation for his carelessness.)

Happily, the American anthem came off, out of tune and out of time but this side of recognizable. We then proceeded to the palace entrance, where Bongo was waiting in all his splendor.

Omar Bongo was not a particularly modest man, which is not a terribly surprising statement about someone who had held absolute authority and access to something in the neighborhood of 1 billion petrodollars a year for more than a decade. He was uninhibited by his less-than-imposing physical presence—though dapper and trim, he stood two inches shy of five feet. Rumor had it that by Bongo fiat, the word *pygmy* would never appear in the government-controlled media. In any event, the furniture in every government office in Gabon, from Cabinet to municipal level, was built so low that upon taking a seat, a visitor of normal height was left practically looking out between his knees. Bongo also offset his shortness with high heels and a splendid wardrobe that usually included a red-and-black cape. It should be noted too that Bongo's appetites for women, drink and all the accoutrements of wealth were sufficiently immense that but for the grace of God, he might otherwise have been producing major motion pictures. He had converted to Islam several years before—curiously, at about the same time Gabon joined the Arab-dominated Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—and had ostentatiously added the El Hadj to his name to indicate he had completed the pilgrimage to Mecca. His apparent devotion to Allah had since waned, if not disappeared, in the face of numerous temptations, most particularly alcohol.

Ambassador McNamara presented his credentials on cue, then turned to his aides, introducing first his deputy chief of mission, Kevin McGuire, and then me. As McNamara turned to me his eyes glazed over and he stammered, "Our cultural attaché..." Though he had known me since his arrival, more than a month earlier, he had forgotten my name. Finally, he blurted out, triumphantly if somewhat inaccurately, "Monsieur Shaffer."

President Bongo's eyes lit up at the words *cultural*

attaché. He looked up at me and said in French, "And when will you give us *un équipe* for me and my staff to study English?" This struck me as a great idea: the U.S. government could certainly field a team of two or three English teachers (*équipe* being French for "team") and put it right there in the palace to help this wonderful foreign leader learn to speak English. *Fantastic*. "Why, whenever you want, Mr. President!" I replied with only a hint of self-importance. After all, helping Bongo wasn't a bad idea. He wasn't a complete clown—he maintained stability, had effectively helped mediate such regional disputes as the Libya-Chad war, had been the first African chief of state to be received by President Reagan and was generous to his friends. (*To a fault*. In hosting



WHEN PRESIDENTS COLLIDE:
above, Bongo and French president Georges Pompidou, on his 1971 visit to Gabon;
right, at the White House in 1987, two great communicators



the annual Organization of African Unity meeting in 1977, he nearly bankrupted the country by building \$1 million chalets furnished with silver services and Mercedeses, among other amenities, for each of the 56 visiting chiefs of state.)

The instant I made my offer, Bongo shouted over his shoulder to summon Marcel Kiki, his special aide for education. Kiki smartly hurried up, whereupon Bongo instructed him to call on me to work out the details. We shook hands, and I began mentally drafting the telegram to Washington, extolling this public-affairs coup and my own modest role. You may be assured that entire foreign-service careers have been built on slimmer achievements than this.

A couple of hours later, riding back to the embassy in the ambassador's car, slightly whiffed from champagne, musing about the public-relations mileage



The champagne bottle exploded, showering the president with glass. Bongo's bodyguard nearly went for his weapon.

we were going to earn, I learned there had been a major communication breakdown. Responsibility for the first glitch resided with Bongo; for the second, with my two foreign-service colleagues, who had quickly shown themselves to be masters in the diplomatic tradition of keeping secrets, especially from all fellow bureaucrats.

Bongo had said the word *équipe* quite clearly, but that is not what he'd meant. He had really meant *équipement*—a laboratory, a hunk of electronic gadgetry with tape recorders and headphones and a rather large price tag. *Oh, yes, McNamara and McGuire casually informed me, he just used the wrong word, but this has been one of his pet projects for years. It's just that nobody ever volunteered to make it happen for him.* Why they hadn't warned me about this is anybody's guess, although it may have been just another example of foreign-service officers' thinking they were the only *real* diplomats, leaving attachés from the USIS to twist slowly in the wind.

"But," I sputtered, "there's no budget. This thing will cost thousands of dollars." McNamara and McGuire were clearly enjoying themselves—there's nothing a career bureaucrat finds funnier than the sight of a fellow career bureaucrat squirming. Finally, McNamara smiled and said, "You promised the president. And you will deliver." I began mentally redrafting my cable to Washington.

GABON WAS NOT EXACTLY A COMIC-OPERA country. About the size of Colorado, physically spectacular and covered with tropical forests, it had a stated population of 1.2 million through the

early 1980s. That figure was reached after a seventies-era census had come in at 600,000, which would have given Gabon an astronomical per capita income—a curiosity in such an evidently poor country. In order to ward off unpleasant questions, Bongo had summarily doubled his subjects. Though the U.S. worked hard to nurture friendly relations, we were resigned to the fact that we could never approach the influence of the French. Gabon had won its independence from France in 1960, but pretty much in name only. In 1964, when President Leon M'Ba was deposed in a military coup, the French flew in a battalion and restored him to office. Eighteen years later some 30,000 French still dominated the city of Libreville, roosting in every branch of government, in practically every business and, in topless swimsuits, on all the best beaches. Because France still treated Gabon as a colony, the Gabonese were among the least dynamic African nationals. Among the more vigorous countries—Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya—the Gabonese were the butt of jokes. Intelligent and hardworking Gabonese tended to be sucked into the bureaucracy, where they lived lives of ease and anonymity; Bongo wanted no potential troublemakers where he could not keep an eye on them.

In serving more than 20 years as a diplomat overseas, I had worked for a wide variety of senior diplomats. All were competent, and some were congenial, but none were relaxed. In Francis Terry McNamara, I thought I had at long last gone to work for someone who was relaxed, or at least appeared to be. Moreover, he had two other distinguishing characteristics: a 29-inch inseam, meaning he was actually shorter (and heavier) than I was, and a robust appreciation for women. Though married—because his wife, Nhu De, was Vietnamese, he referred to himself as a miscegenationist—he regaled me with stories of his conquests of African women, presumably during his single days, and made sexual comments about nearly every woman he encountered. He even leered at my wife, Susan, who restrained her natural tendency toward outspokenness when the ambassador ogled her bosom.

McNamara was a career foreign-service officer who had risen through the ranks. He had served as one of our last consuls general in South Vietnam and during the chaotic collapse in 1975 had demonstrated considerable bravery during a hazardous riverborne evacuation under constant threat of enemy fire. To his dismay, McNamara had shown up frequently in *Decent Interval*, the book by former CIA agent Frank Snepp, where he was repeatedly criticized (among his lesser crimes was having a custom-made designer helmet). McNamara had been shunted aside during the Carter years, a fact that he believed improved his prospects when Reagan took office. At a time when more and more ambassadorships were being given to business cronies, McNamara was given Gabon. Of course, not too many executives contributed five- and six-figure sums to the

GOP in order to win a posting to equatorial Africa.

It soon became apparent that life with McNamara would not be without its problems. He was, in a word, undiplomatic. He assumed everyone was his intellectual inferior. Once, he drafted a telegram to the political officer in Paris, suggesting that the man read the newspapers. "But Mr. Ambassador," I ventured carefully, "he probably does read the papers." He considered that for a moment, then reluctantly struck the phrase.

OFFICIAL ENTERTAINMENT AT THE AMBASSADOR'S residence was frequent—a large dinner every two or three weeks—and always nightmarish. The Gabonese had a distressing tendency to accept invitations they had no intention of honoring; they just didn't like to say no. We would call and confirm on the day of a dinner, to no avail; at one dinner I hosted, none of the seven Gabonese guests showed. At the very least, two or three guests would never materialize, and Nhu De and I would dash around the table, removing and rearranging name cards, she spitting invective at me all the while. Still, people seemed to enjoy her parties. Or at least they became inebriated to the point where they seemed to enjoy them.

The culmination of most parties at the embassy was a performance of the ambassador's favorite trick. The gregarious McNamara would take a bottle of champagne, unsheathe his bolo knife and with a great flourish chop off the neck of the bottle. The feat always had the same effect: the entire top of the bottle would shear off neatly with a loud pop and a rush of bubbly, and all those who hadn't seen it before would ooh and aah and applaud. The day the ambassador chose to show his trick to President Bongo, however, no one applauded. Bongo and his entire Cabinet were visiting a USIS exhibit at a trade fair. Although his protocol officials had warned us that the president was not to be offered anything to drink—most likely fearing that if offered a drink at each booth the president would never see the entire fair—McNamara, who always scorned instructions from inferiors, produced a bottle of champagne the moment Bongo arrived, his wife and entourage in tow. "Monsieur President," McNamara said, "would you like a glass of champagne?" Bongo had probably not turned down a drink since he was a child, and the ambassador soon brandished the bottle and his trusty bolo knife. Unfortunately, it was American champagne, in a bottle shaped differently from the French. It exploded, gashing McNamara's hand and showering Bongo and his wife with glass and champagne. Bongo's security chief nearly pulled his gun. McNamara, bleeding all over his white tropical suit, never missed a beat, and while Bongo brushed champagne off his lapels McNamara opened another bottle, albeit in the conventional way. I don't believe he ever apologized, but I never saw the bolo knife again.

THE CHARMING MARCEL KIKI ARRIVED AT MY office only a few minutes late. Kiki had attained his position as aide for education not because of overwhelming intelligence, though he may have been very smart, but through simple cronyism. Being a drinking buddy of President Bongo's was the surest road to success, and Kiki was in the inner circle. He had dropped by to make sure I was going to keep my promise, but he felt no need to push that cause. He knew that the president wanted a language laboratory, he knew I knew, he assured himself I was going to follow through, and that was it. I was on my own.

My pals in the United States Information Agency in Washington were not amused when I called (I decided to call; you can always claim a telephone conversation was misunderstood, but a cable is forever). No, there was no agency funding available; no, there was no equipment on hand; no, no one knew what I should do, apart from talking McNamara into forgetting the whole thing. Fat chance. McNamara thought it was a very good idea—we discussed practically no USIS project but this—and that meant the rest of us were wrong. Despite continuing reluctance, Washington finally agreed to order the equipment and ship it, leaving me to find \$3,000 to pay for it. Fortunately, I had long training as a budget juggler, and by trimming and cutting programs and transferring funds from account to account, I managed to make the money available.

While I was lining up the equipment, McNamara had a second audience with Bongo and came back with the news that the president wanted an American teacher to run the lab and handle all lessons for him and his senior staff. He wanted, in fact, an American *woman*, McNamara said. Call me naive, but I didn't read anything into the specificity of the request. The ambassador charged me with finding the appropriate



Brill resisted; Bongo insisted. She backed away; he followed.



THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR ELEVATIN': Bongo steppin' out at an Organization of African Unity conference in Somalia

person, which seemed the least of my problems.

I interviewed the local Peace Corps director's wife, a bright and vivacious person who was looking for something to do. She said she would love to handle the project. When I told McNamara I had found the right person, he blew up. "I do not want the wife of an American embassy official in that job," he said. I probably should have inquired more about his line of reasoning, but I chalked his decision up to the fact that McNamara happened to loathe the woman's husband, and I chose not to pursue it. Instead, I looked within the Peace Corps.

Mona Brill* was a willowy, self-possessed, intelligent woman in her mid-twenties who had spent three years teaching English to Gabonese children. She spoke French well, and I had been impressed by her calm and confidence. I had seen her most recently when the ambassador and I had made an unannounced call while on a quick trip to Franceville, near where she worked. When we dropped in, she was wearing very short shorts and cleaning her refrigerator, but she welcomed us nonchalantly. This was the sort of person we needed, I decided. Unflappable, experienced, qualified.

McNamara loved the idea. *Just right*, he said. And since Brill's tour was almost up and she wanted to stay in Gabon, she liked the idea, too. We were ready to get this show on the road.

The introduction of Brill to the president was an event I missed. McNamara did the honors. It was all very straightforward, he assured me. *Businesslike*. We

would pay her salary, the Gabonese government would pay for her housing, the palace would provide permanent space for the equipment and her office. Bongo was delighted to meet her, McNamara reported. I was delighted, although by this point I had begun to develop some suspicions. It didn't matter: ten months after we had promised, we were going to get a language laboratory for the president. And a teacher too.

DID YOU SET ME UP?," BRILL DEMANDED AS she barged into my office. "Did the American embassy set me up for the president?" Her eyes were glazed, her face was flushed, her hands trembled as she walked in and slammed down into a chair. My little suspicions had blossomed. President Bongo said he wanted to learn English, but what he really wanted was to have sex with an American woman.

Brill said the president's military aide had picked her up and taken her straight to Bongo's office, whereupon the president had led her into an adjoining private room and almost immediately invited her to take off her clothes. Brill had resisted; Bongo had insisted. She'd backed away; he'd followed. He'd stroked, squeezed, pleaded. Brill had found herself in the awkward position of having to turn down an autocrat in the heart of his autocracy. How do you say no to a president, especially President Bongo, who, like most Third World men, seemed to believe the prototypical American woman to be the *Playboy* Playmate?

Brill had escaped, she said, by announcing that she

was saving herself for her boyfriend. Now, she demanded to know, *are there details of my contract that I'm not aware of? Because putting out for President Bongo is not what I had in mind.*

I immediately called Ambassador McNamara, told him there appeared to be something of an emergency and asked if Brill and I could see him immediately. *Sure*, he said, so we hustled off to the embassy. McNamara listened to her story with a serious and understanding expression on his face, the very model of a professional diplomat. Finally, he spoke. "Mona, your only assignment is to teach English at the presidential palace. There are no other requirements or expectations."

Mollified by those assurances, Brill agreed to fulfill her contract, which, in the absence of sexual harassment, was not a bad deal. Bongo had put her up in a room at the Intercontinental Hotel overlooking the Atlantic, had given her a car and was going to pay for at least one trip a year back to the States. Considering the prestige and the benefits, I think, she decided that warding off an occasional presidential paw was endurable. If she decided anything else, she kept it to herself.

NOBODY DOES ANYTHING IN THE FOREIGN service without some sort of ceremony. In an occupation where it is so difficult to measure any accomplishment, we make the most of our little victories. Therefore, when everything had been completed, we scheduled an official inauguration of President Bongo's language lab. The event was to take place at 11:00 a.m.

Brill, McNamara and I appeared at the palace at the appointed time and were kept waiting for perhaps half an hour, not an unusual delay. But when we were finally ushered into Bongo's office, he was plainly drunk, very nearly incoherent.

He wobbled over to us on his high heels, a look of sadness on his inebriated little face. Bongo slipped his arm around Brill's waist, teetered, and drooled a little. Finally he looked at McNamara and me and spoke, not as a president to envoys but as a man to other men. "She does not love me," he mumbled. "*Elle ne m'aime pas.*" Talk about conversational nonstarters.

The awkwardness did not last long. Brill disengaged herself, and the president offered us a glass of champagne. This was just what the president did not need, but it got us talking about something other than the vagaries of love, and in a little while we went on to the dedication ceremony. Bongo could barely stand, but McNamara held him more or less upright until he could get behind a console and under some headphones. At that point the cameras went off, tape ran, and the event was captured for posterity.

At the reception that followed, Bongo was more cogent and a bit perkier. Everyone in the large group on hand—the Gabonese Cabinet ran to almost 50, and most of them were there, along with dozens of bureaucrats and cronies—expressed his personal and

professional admiration for the lab and the work that had gone into it. Whatever was to come after this in my diplomatic career, I would always have this. I could rest on my laurels, such as they were.

EPILOGUE: PRESIDENT BONGO ATTENDED private classes in the lab around half a dozen times over the next few months. He did not learn English as effortlessly as he had expected, and his interest deteriorated once he surrendered the last bit of hope that he could win Brill. He did, however, continue to pay her, and even suggested to his staff that they take classes. Brill took the job seriously, and the USIS continued to regard the lab as a major accomplishment. McNamara next began a campaign to persuade Bongo to let the Voice of America lease time on the Gabonese-French shortwave transmitter, but nothing came of it. The French were eager to quash anything that would increase American influence. In time, the State Department cut McNamara's tour short, but later it named him ambassador to nearby Cape Verde.

Brill remained in Gabon for several years. She became more and more a part of the Gabonese



The ambassador held Bongo upright until he could get under some headphones.

establishment, less and less attached to the USIS. She became the lady who ran the president's language lab. She returned home to academia in 1990.

Omar Bongo is still president, but now the Gabonese are rioting in the streets, demanding political and economic reform. He still doesn't speak English. **3**

Master Philip and the Boys

ONE CHARMING, ANCIENT RICH GUY HAS DECIDED WHAT ALL BUILDINGS SHOULD LOOK LIKE FOR MOST OF THIS CENTURY. HE IS DECIDING WHAT ALL BUILDINGS SHOULD LOOK LIKE RIGHT NOW. HE THINKS IT'S ALL A BIT OF A JOKE.

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION IS, IN this democratic age, one of New York's better clubs. Founded in 1847 and housed in a McKim, Mead & White building on West 43rd Street, the Century accepts members on the basis of their achievements in the world; that is, on the basis of merit, usually in an area like journalism

by John Brodie or cultural philanthropy or government. After some controversy, women were admitted in 1988. The men and women who join the Century—among the more celebrated of the 2,000 cur-

rent members are John Lindsay, John Chancellor, Frank Rich, Tina Brown, Tom Wolfe, Jacqueline Onassis, Arthur Schlesinger and Robert Caro—tend to act much as the members of any club do: they are congenially patronizing to their lunch guests; they affect a manner of easy condescension with the little man in livery downstairs; they use their membership to remind themselves that they are pretty darn important people; they are snobs. Naturally, the whole purpose of a club is to provide a setting for such behavior.

On a Tuesday night in February, a



Philip Johnson flanked by
good-boy postmodernist
protégé Robert Stern
and bad-boy deconstructivist
protégé Peter Eisenman

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR SPY BY GEORGE LANGE

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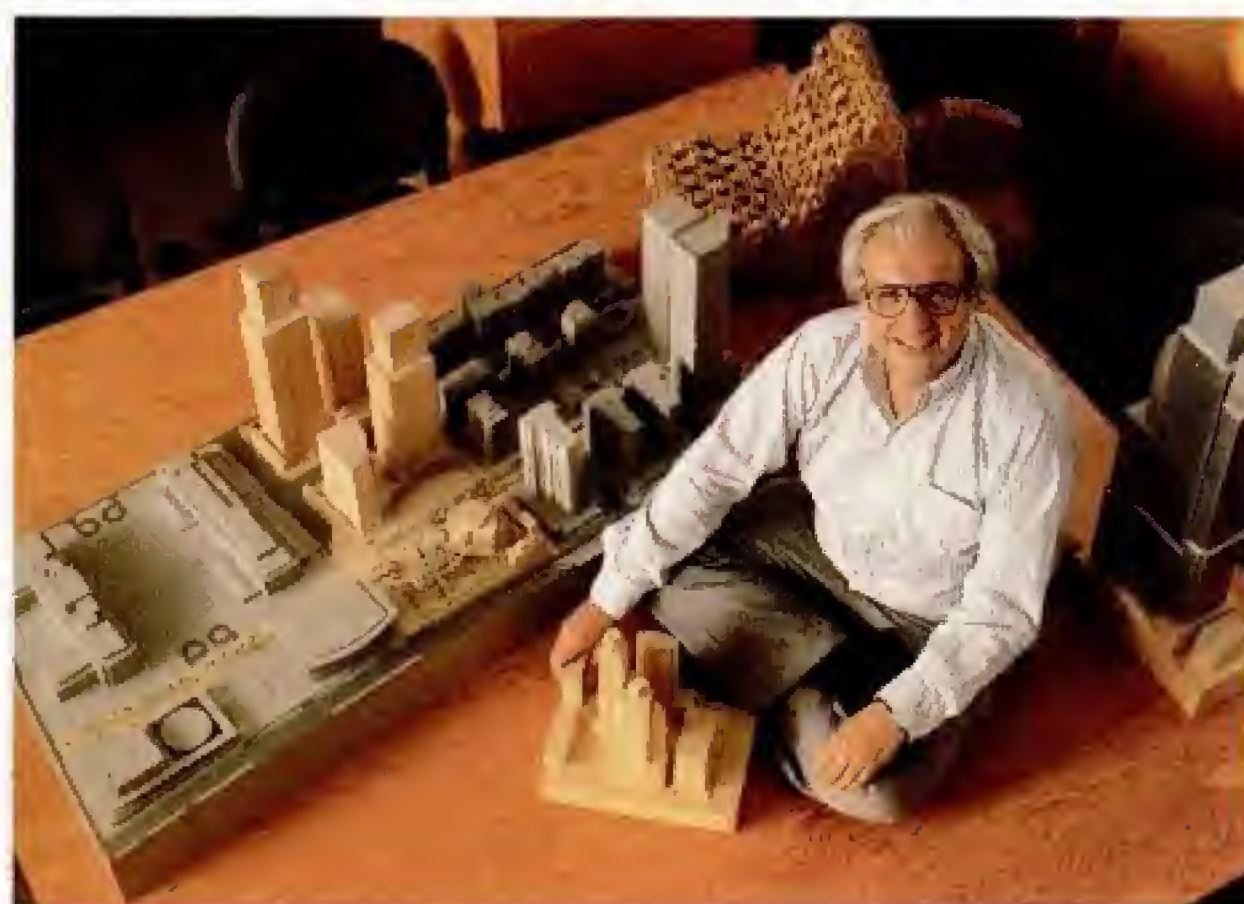
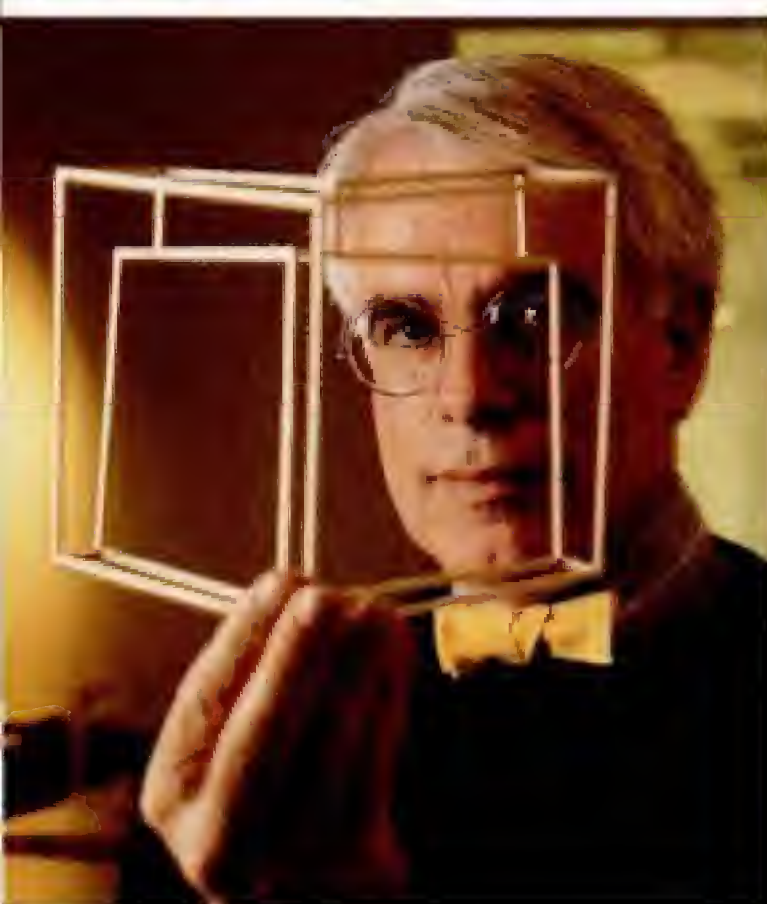
group of fairly typical Century members held a dinner in one of the association's smallish, private upstairs rooms, the Henry Platt Library. The members had asked a few guests to join them, making up a party of 12; all wore dinner jackets. No women were present. Several of these men had met in this same room for dinner regularly for more than ten

skyline of your city, with its aging flat-topped skyscrapers built in the sixties and its cupola-topped skyscrapers built in the eighties and its melted-jungle-gym-topped skyscrapers that will be built in the nineties. They are responsible for the chairs in your office waiting room, for the shape of your teapot, for the Doric columns and Palladian porticoes that sud-

sitting in and most of the ones you see.

Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry and Robert Stern are architects. Certainly, many architects and developers exist in the world, but these men are the busiest and most prominent and influential American architects working today. Sitting together at the Century hav-

tration of power was both remarkable and possibly suspect. Architects seem to be a fairly harmless breed, however—like painters with a practical side. But these architects, tasteful and egg-headed as they may be, actually build things—big buildings made of lots of steel and concrete and wiring that cost tens of millions of dollars. Sitting around upstairs



COCKTAILS AT 6:30: *clockwise from top left*, Anglophile Stern smiles ironically in trilby and greatcoat; Graves smiles ironically before Palladian-styled pumpkin; Meier looks severe; wild child Gehry plays with building blocks; Eisenman imitates Dr. Frankenstein.

years—at one time as often as once a month. Fitting the Century profile, they were successful in a field that calls for a bit more imagination than does business, and they were a tad uncertain whether they were gentlemen in the orthodox sense.

Still, this group was unique. The handful of men who met at the Century that night are responsible for the

denly appeared in the malls you shop in, for the peaked roofs on the townhomes down the road, for the looming Art Deco missile silo where your lawyer works. The men who were in the room at the Century—a warm, clubby room named after an architect and lined with books on architecture and design—are responsible for the building you are

ing dinner every couple of months, they are like a Masonic lodge that really does control the world—or at least one important part of it. If all the heads of the auto companies had regular black-tie dinners in a private dining room of their club, or if Sununu and Baker and Bill Bradley and Sam Nunn and Ted Kennedy did, we might think the concen-

at the Century, they decide what American cities will look like for decades.

Well, actually, *they* don't decide. The person who was at the head of the table at the Century decides. Graves, Meier, Eisenman, Gehry and Stern are, in some measure, the instruments of one man's will. They owe him everything, from their membership in the Century, to

the commissions for important buildings, to the occasional handout when times were tough. They are therefore loyal followers of this man despite his spectacular inconstancy.

Since the turn of the century, three major architectural movements have appeared: the International Style, in the 1920s and '30s; postmodernism, in the 1970s and '80s; and deconstructivism, in the very late 1980s. In each case, the early adherents of the movement believed in it as one would believe in a religion. These were not matters of taste—architects were not milliners, after all—and to design a building in a particular style was to say something profound about the nature of man and society and possibly the universe.

tainly, ever will. In no other profession has such a figure arisen. Who, in 1979, won the first Pritzker Prize—architecture's most prestigious honor, and one that carries an award of \$100,000? Philip Johnson. Who has dominated the Museum of Modern Art's architecture-and-design department since 1930? Philip Johnson. Who became friendly with the Rockefellers and other wealthy individual and corporate clients through MoMA? Philip Johnson. Who is the first architect CEOs think of when they want a referral? Philip Johnson. Who foisted Ludwig Mies van der Rohe on America in 1937, and underwrote the journal that published

interested in the next, whatever the next is." Johnson shows disarming self-awareness in such remarks. To maintain his position all these years, he has employed an amazing combination of midwestern backslapping, eastern aestheticism, seeming European rigor (those glasses), personal wealth (his father gave him millions), WASP clubbability, canny intelligence, impeccable fashion clairvoyance and Warholian coyness. Especially impressive, Johnson has been America's most important architect for 60 years without being anything like its greatest architect.

The best illustration of the way Johnson makes things "go ahead" is his role

another. Working on a project together once, Eisenman and Graves loathed each other so deeply that they reportedly communicated only through an intermediary. Stern, walking through one of Graves's hotels at Disney World last winter, remarked to some architecture writers, "This is a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to stay here."

Since the late 1970s, the kids have joined the Century one after the other. "I write so many goddamn letters," Johnson says with a sigh. Eisenman and Stern approached Johnson and asked him to sit at the head of the table, and Stern suggested the dinners be black-tie, because "people behave better when dressed properly." Johnson's relationship with Stern, Graves, Meier, Eisenman and Gehry shows how Johnson has always operated and how big-time,

Johnson has managed to be the architectural equivalent of Marx and Keynes and

One architect, however, has managed to be at the very forefront of each of these movements. One architect has managed to be the architectural equivalent of Marx and Keynes and Arthur Laffer all in one lifetime, to be the architectural equivalent of a cardinal, a rabbi and an atheist—and to get away with it. And not only to get away with it but to be at the center of power in his profession for 60 years. Seated at the head of the table that Tuesday night in February at the Century was Philip Courtelyou Johnson. He has a simple explanation for his success: "I'm a whore," he has said.

With his eager and steadfast protégés to serve him, Johnson has ruled a hugely important profession in this country longer than anyone else ever has or, almost cer-

excerpts of Robert Venturi's first book in 1966, and curated MoMA's deconstructivism show in 1988? Philip Johnson. Who built, with Mies, the most important International Style building in America (the Seagram Building, on Park Avenue, where, at The Four Seasons, Johnson lunches almost daily), and who built the most influential postmodern building (the AT&T building, on Madison Avenue) and has designed the biggest deconstructivist development in the country (Times Square)? Philip Johnson.

"I'm a chameleon at heart," Johnson says, "and not being a form-giver of my own, like Mies, I don't have that ability or that inclination. But I do like people, and I do like proselytizing, and I like to make things go ahead. And I'm always in-

Arthur Laffer all in one lifetime

in bringing the kids—as he calls his Century dinner companions—to prominence and keeping them there, all the while receiving credit for their innovations. "I don't understand why we can't have dinner with whom we want to," Johnson says of the Century get-togethers, "but everybody makes it out as if we're making a goats-and-sheep out of it. Jealous. Jealous. Jealous." (Other architects present at the dinner in February were Cesar Pelli, Charles Gwathmey and John Burgee—all Century members—as well as Jaque Robertson, Kevin Roche, Michael Rotondi, Paul Rudolph, Max Scogin and Bernard Tschumi.) Outsiders may be jealous of the kids, but the kids are jealous of one

high-style architecture is carried on today: with an 84-year-old Gepetto in evening clothes in his workshop—a private dining room of a New York club—and his handmade creations around him. "I thought I invented Frank Gehry. I thought I invented Peter Eisenman," Johnson says.

PHILIP JOHNSON WAS BORN in Ohio in 1906. His father was a lawyer who gave Johnson a large amount of stock in the Aluminum Company of America. As a result of a nervous condition, Johnson spent seven years getting through Harvard. He did not earn a degree from Harvard's Graduate School of Design until he was 37, and he failed the design section

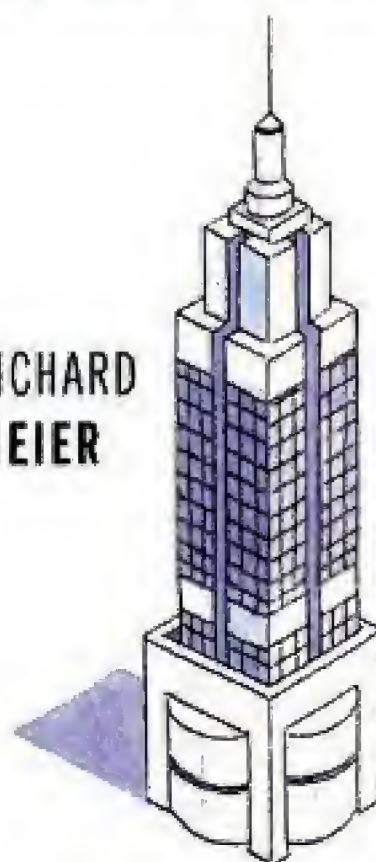
of the New York State architect's-license exam several times. In 1932, however, when he was just 26, Johnson established himself as a force in architecture in America by curating the show "Modern Architecture" at MoMA. With one stroke, modernism—or the International Style, as Johnson and architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock titled their book on the subject—was brought to America. Johnson himself built an important modernist structure—his own home in New Canaan, Connecticut, finished in 1949 and known as the Glass House. Having headed MoMA's architecture department from 1930 to 1934, he took it over once again from 1946 until 1956. In the interval, Johnson received his architecture degree, dallied with Nazism and served in the Army. He designed the museum's annex in 1950, its sculpture garden in 1953 and two new wings in 1964. (MoMA brought work indirectly too—Blanchette Rockefeller commissioned Johnson to build a house on

THE EMPIRE'S NEW CLOTHES: One important commission that Philip Johnson Johnson was beginning his career. What if things had been different?

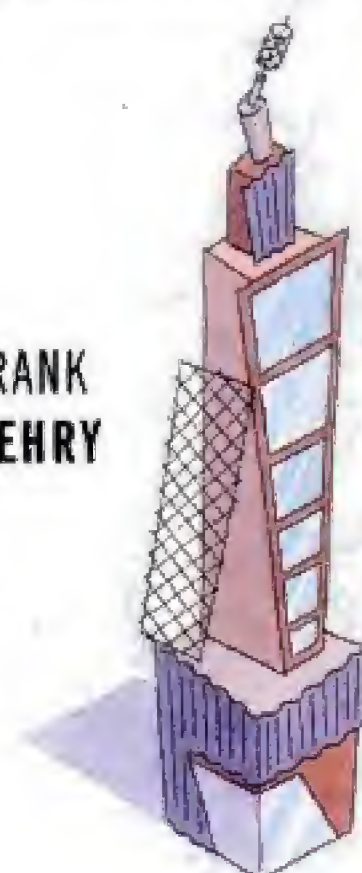
PHILIP
JOHNSON
1961



RICHARD
MEIER



FRANK
GEHRY



hail-fellow-well-met. He had a knack for the irreverent remark ("I would rather sleep in Chartres Cathedral with the nearest john two blocks away than in a Harvard house with back-to-back bathrooms"); he enjoyed holding court in students' houses, introducing anecdotes with such throwaway lines as "Yesterday in Cairo..."; and he was connected to the world of wealthy clients in New York.

James Stuart Polshek (a former dean of Columbia's

Bronfman and the New York State Bar [in Albany] were two gifts from Philip," Polshek says.

Another Yale alumnus from the late 1950s remembers that Johnson would often play the raconteur after lectures at a student residence called The Studio. At first the drinking and talking were good fun, but then the style of these occasions changed. "It started becoming precious," says this architect, "with china and guys sitting cross-legged and

Twenty years ago, when solemn Bauhaus modernism was still architecture's official religion, Stern designed buildings that included bits of history and ornament, thus helping to invent post-modernism. Speaking of his symbiosis with Stern, Johnson told SPY, "He doesn't need any help. Not back then either." Stern may not have needed help, but Johnson provided it anyway. In the early 1960s, Stern became a frequent visitor to Johnson's Glass House, and Johnson would attend the salons Stern and his roommates hosted at a house that Phyllis Lambert rented to them cheap. Lambert, whom

"You're in your early twenties, and there's this Gatsby-like figure with pots of money....You can't help but be seduced"

52nd Street when she ran into him in the museum's elevator one day.) Even though Johnson resigned his post, he has always retained enormous influence at the museum.

As a visiting critic and lecturer at Yale during the 1950s and '60s, Johnson first began to gather the kids around him, but he was not a major figure there. That role fell to such charismatic second-generation modernists as Paul Rudolph and Louis Kahn. Johnson functioned as an architectural

School of Architecture and Planning, a Century member and a student at Yale when Johnson lectured there) remembers that a carload of his classmates would often drive to the Glass House for tea on Sunday and find such giants as I. M. Pei and Henry-Russell Hitchcock there. Johnson's kindness extended beyond invitations to tea: "The house for the

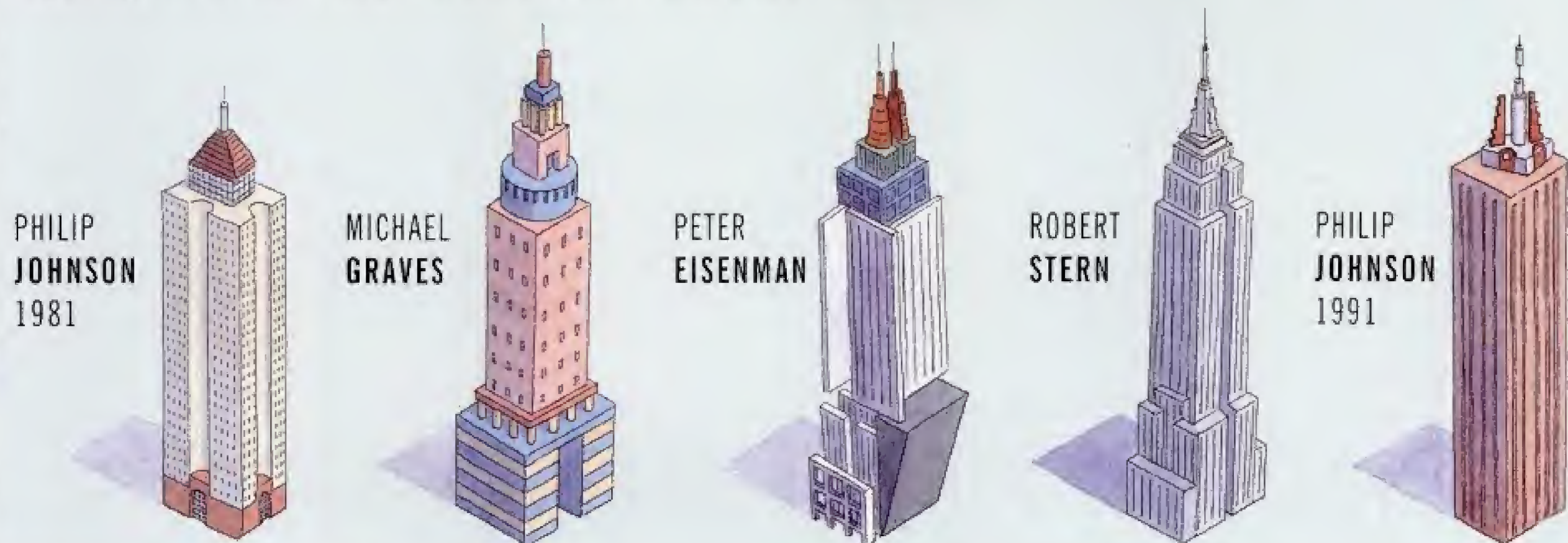
little cups of tea." A few years later, at a different residence, one of the guys sitting cross-legged with a little cup of tea was Bob Stern, a Brooklyn boy who started calling himself Robert A.M. Stern sometime after Yale.

STERN IS A SLIGHT, HYPER-kinetic man, dapper and smart, puckish and insecure.

Johnson once called "the client of the century," was the daughter of Samuel Bronfman, who had hired Johnson and Mies to design the Seagram Building.

The relationship between Stern and Johnson grew beyond teacher-and-student to one of friendly patronage. When the editors of *Perspecta* needed someone to underwrite this influential Yale

could not direct to whomever he pleased was the Empire State Building—it was finished in 1931, just as the precocious Philip Johnson was born. Depending on Johnson's mood, the building might have looked like this:



architecture journal...there was Philip. Stern edited *Perspecta* during 1964 and '65. Coincidentally, *Perspecta* published Johnson polemics such as "The Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture." Stern was also the first to publish excerpts from one of the most important architectural treatises of the last half century, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction*, which became postmodernism's manifesto.

Stern willingly ran errands for Johnson in those days—when Johnson wanted research done and didn't feel like making the drive up from New Canaan to New Haven, the public phone in the architecture studio would ring. "Hey, Sterno, it's Philip Johnson on the line!" was often heard amid the drafting tables that year.

After Stern graduated, Johnson got his ex-student a grant so that he could complete a book, and at the age of 26, upon the urging of Johnson, Stern was selected by the Architectural League of New York in 1965 to curate what would prove to be one of the most significant shows of his gen-

eration, "40 Under 40"—an anointment of the several dozen best young architects. As one of Stern's roommates from his Yale days remembers, "You're in your early twenties, and there's this Gatsby-like figure with pots of money who's helping you find work, and you can't help but be seduced."

In fact, "40 Under 40" is a case of the gang's-all-here, for the show featured work by Peter Eisenman (born 1932), Michael Graves (born 1934), Richard Meier (born 1934) and even Stern himself (born 1939).

Thus, thanks to Johnson's help and his insistence that Stern include his own work in the "40 Under 40" exhibition, the young architecture historian embarked on a rewarding career as one of America's foremost practitioners of postmodernism.

PETER EISENMAN, THE LEADING proponent of deconstructivism, the perverse, dissonant architectural style that has followed postmodernism, is proud to be the bad boy of his field, happy to enthrall student acolytes with talk of Derrida and Foucault. He has success-

fully espoused his fuck-you architectural theory from a quite comfy establishmentarian nest—a tenured post at Princeton, membership in the Century. How, one wonders, did he get his start?

In conjunction with MoMA and Cornell University, Eisenman founded the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York in 1967. Like many institutions of its day, it was idealistic. Eisenman, the 35-year-old director, declared that "architects have abrogated their responsibility to deal with social problems."

The IAUS was a clearinghouse for the hot pencils of the era—Meier and Graves passed through its doors—and during the 1970s could claim to be American architecture's intellectual locus. But money was always a problem. "Check kiting was an art [at the IAUS]," remembers one veteran. The Institute survived thanks to the kindness of a number of patrons, such as MoMA trustees Armand Bartos and Lily Auchincloss. These funds did not keep the wolf from the door, however.

There was Philip!

Johnson paid many of the salaries and expenses at the IAUS. Eisenman spent countless hours interviewing his patron for a biography to be published under its aegis. And when the IAUS was planning to move from its loft in the West Forties to new digs, Johnson even offered to underwrite the cost of the building, as long as the school would be renamed the Philip Johnson Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies.

Eisenman left the IAUS in 1982 (at Johnson's insistence, it closed a year later). Eisenman wished to move away from the role of thinker and firebrand to that of building architect, from perpetual undergraduate to mainstream grown-up. How to make this transition? Johnson says he tossed Eisenman one of his major commissions—the Architecture School at the University of Cincinnati. Still, a show at MoMA featuring Eisenman's ideas might help, if only such a show could be mounted. There was Philip!

Here's how Johnson delivered Eisenman his MoMA

show: When Johnson's successor at MoMA, Arthur Drexler, died in 1987, Stuart Wrede, Drexler's lieutenant, became acting director of MoMA's department of architecture and design. Wrede was a Yale who had edited *Perspecta*. Yet Johnson went around town bad-mouthing him. "Wrede is doing an adequate job, but he lacks carbonation. He's not a showman. We need someone who can play ball," he told one journalist. Wrede knew that while Johnson probably lacked the power to get him sacked at MoMA, his approval would practically guarantee him the directorship.

In the fall of 1987, Wrede, still only MoMA's acting director, approached Johnson about guest-curating a show at the museum. One night that fall, Wrede found himself seated at Johnson's right hand at the Century in the company of Gehry, Eisenman, John Burgee—Johnson's partner—and a number of young critics especially sympathetic to the contentious work of Gehry and Eisenman. At this dinner a new blue-chip style of architecture was officially born: deconstructivism. Mark Wigley, an Eisenman tutee, would organize a show based on this theme at MoMA. Johnson would nominally "curate." At the same dinner, Johnson toasted Wrede as MoMA's new director—not *acting* director, but director. Of course, Johnson is modest about this seeming exercise of power: "That was decided by the director of the museum."

The decon show caused a sensation, in large part because of Johnson's involvement—he had certified the strange new International Style at MoMA, and now, 56



THREE (OF ABOUT 19) FACES OF PHILIP: *from top, the whimsical aesthete in his private gallery in 1966; the Moses of postmodernism on Time's cover when the AT&T building was astounding the world; the socialite with Jacqueline Onassis*

years later, he would certify the strange new deconstructivist style at MoMA. Eisenman has done very well lately. He had spent most of his career thinking and talking about buildings, but he finished a well-received \$25 million arts center at Ohio State University last year, has seven more major projects on the boards and was the subject of a *Vanity Fair* profile in January 1991. According to associates, however, Eisenman was not satisfied. He bristled that

night at the Century when Johnson said, "We would not be here tonight if it weren't for Frank Gehry and Frank's house." (Gehry's own house in Santa Monica, essentially turned inside out in the mid-1970s, is considered the first deconstructivist building.) When asked by *SPY* about this sibling rivalry, Johnson happily threw gasoline on a smoldering fire. "Eisenman is determined to be an architect, and Gehry will never be anything but," he said. "Eisenman is an intellectual, and Gehry is a natural." Any disrespect between Eisenman and Johnson is evidently a tolerable fact of life, however. "[Philip] was the best man at my wedding [to my new wife]," Eisenman says. "That speaks of something."

Johnson still visits Eisenman's firm regularly to critique work—work whose principles are in utter opposition to the vaguely neo-classic postmodern work Johnson still does, which itself was born in total opposition to the modernist buildings Johnson had built

before that. Indeed, Johnson is working on deconstructivist and postmodern projects simultaneously. The Times Square redevelopment—originally designed in a postmodern style—now has the edgy, deliberately awkward shapes favored by the decon kids. Johnson has also just finished designing the new Museum of Broadcasting, a commission he received from MoMA trustee William Paley. It will be a very decorous postmodern building. Somehow, Johnson's followers never feel abandoned or intolerably abused. And his mentors, such as Mies, are safely dead.

LOOKING AROUND THE dinner table, we see Michael Graves. "He draws beautifully," says Johnson, "but that's quite different from building buildings."

Graves is, after Johnson, the most famous American architect, thanks in part to the stylish knickknacks he has designed, especially his Alessi teapot. His often brilliant version of postmodernism—ancient Egypt by way of Tuscany, children's blocks enlarged a thousandfold—was, by the mid-1980s, both influential and popular. Yet just 15 years ago he was mostly an architect of small interiors and a gifted draftsman. In the 1970s, Graves taught at Princeton (where he now holds tenure), but he was so desperate for work that he once told a colleague he wasn't an architect but rather "the cubist kitchen king of Princeton, New Jersey." Renovations for his well-to-do neighbors were a staple of his practice.

In 1980 a jury chose Graves over several competitors to design the municipal



office building in Portland, Oregon. Where was Philip? On the jury. The Portland Building would become the second-most-important post-modernist building, after Johnson's own AT&T Building. Now that Johnson had put Graves on the map, both by infusing postmodernism with momentum and by helping him get the Portland job, he settled back and watched the kid garner a few projects on his own. Then, acting, in his words, as "unofficial consultant to the trustees," he recommended Graves (and two others, Gwathmey and Meier) to the Whitney Museum as

and a hotel he designed for Euro-Disney is under construction; Gehry also designed part of Euro-Disney and has a U.S. office project in the works for Disney. "Of course," Johnson says, as sharp and unsentimental as ever, "Eisenman flubbed [his Disney job]." (Eisenman wanted to build a hotel at Euro-Disney underground.)

STERN, EISENMAN, GRAVES, Gehry... whom have we left out? Oh, yes. Richard Meier. Meier is self-serious and

ture critic—that is, he was by far the most influential architecture critic in the country. Although he joined the Century the same year Meier did (1979), Goldberger categorically denies he has ever participated in the architects' dinners, and Johnson confirms this. But Stern says, "He might have come once—I don't remember," and Eisenman is emphatic. "Goldberger's been there," he says. [Kurt Andersen, a co-editor of this magazine, is a Century member and architecture writer; he

Johnson has recently been embracing Sorkin, despite Sorkin's ferocious attacks on him in *SPY* and elsewhere.) This new, leaner and meaner Goldberger may annoy Johnson; Johnson's companion of the past decade, David Whitney, told a critic's girlfriend at a dinner party recently, "Paul Goldberger's bitten the hand that fed him."

CHARLES JENCKS, AN ARCHITECT and author and main theorist of postmodernism, recently told a journalist

"Philip is the most culturally powerful architect since Bernini," says Peter Eisenman

architects for its redesign. Graves was chosen for this troubled project, and although he has redesigned it twice, no work has begun. But just as Johnson designed both for the Rockefellers and for MoMA, Graves designed an apartment for the chairman of the Whitney Board of Trustees, Flora Miller Biddle.

Graves has also benefited from Johnson's touch with CEOs. Around 1985, Disney's new chairman, Michael Eisner, the de facto Lorenzo de Medici of our times, needed to find architects for the company's massive building programs in France, California and Florida. There was Philip. Johnson remembers his lunch with Eisner: "I gave him the names of young architects—Gehry, Eisenman and Graves." Youth is a relative thing—all three architects were 50 at the time. Graves has built two hotels at Disney World and a new corporate office building for Disney in Burbank,

imperious, the last of the pure modernists. His white houses and white museums are cool, graceful, impeccable. For the last several years he has devoted himself mainly to designing the commission of the decade, the Getty museum complex in Los Angeles. Where has Philip been, though? Meier organizes Century dinners and was the host of record for the one that took place in February, but Johnson is uncharacteristically closemouthed concerning him. He will refer only to Meier's 1984 Pritzker Prize. "Maybe that's what I did for Meier," Johnson says—Johnson was a Pritzker juror from 1980 to 1984. (Robert Venturi was awarded the 1991 Pritzker on April 8.)

THE DINNERS AT THE CENTURY also seem to have a mystery guest. Paul Goldberger is now the chief culture editor of *The New York Times*, but until recently he served only as the paper's architec-

ture critic.]

In any case, Johnson and Goldberger are not unknown to each other. "Naturally, [Goldberger] was one of my bright people at Yale," says Johnson. "I don't think [*Times* publisher] Punch Sulzberger called me about him, but it was known around town that I thought he was a damn bright writer." When Goldberger was at Yale, he needed someone to underwrite *The New Journal*, an uninfluential foray into New Journalism that Goldberger edited in the early 1970s. There was Philip! As a senior in 1971, Goldberger wrote two features for the *Times's* Sunday magazine (one on Venturi), and upon graduation he went to work there as an assistant editor. He tended to treat Johnson very favorably in the paper, but he seemed to become distinctly less generous after *The Village Voice* published Michael Sorkin's article "Why Goldberger Is So Bad" in 1985. (Motivated by shrewdness or generosity or a kind of jolly perverseness or—probably—all three,

that "Philip is not a great critic and is a horrible architect. He's a good whatever-he-is. Philip has ruined a lot of movements. He goes in and asset-strips." When *SPY* asked the kids and others whether Johnson was a great architect, long silences ensued. Eventually we received interesting answers, none of which was a simple yes. One writer who is friendly with Johnson and who requested anonymity said, "He has silken antennae, and he is at no time as happy as when he is tuned in to what's hot and happening." Kevin Roche, the kid for whom Johnson claims to have delivered the E. F. Hutton building off Sixth Avenue (finished in 1986) and Morgan Guaranty's new building on Wall Street, has said, "I never really think of Philip as an architect. With him it always seemed more like an avocation—like being a gentleman farmer. The rest of us are farmers, but Philip is a gentleman farmer." Stanley Tigerman, a frequent presence at the Century and a lovable, fun-loving man not above de-

signing a building in the shape of an erect penis (the Daisy House in Indiana), calls Johnson "the unelected dean of the post-graduate aging enfants terribles." To Eisenman, Philip is "the most culturally powerful architect since Bernini." And Stern, who returned SPY's phone calls because "Eisenman told me I had to," says, "I like Tiger-man's and Eisenman's [answers]. Put them together and you can say they're mine." Stern also says of Johnson, "He's an Ohio boy. He's a booster, a Rotarian for high architecture and high ideals."

These comments all hit on qualities essential to Johnson's success. He does indeed have a keen eye for what's coming—and, better yet, the ability to help make his stylistic prophecies self-fulfilling. He has the confidence and aloofness that only a personal fortune can bring. He dominates his field. He is enthusiastic and playful. Of course, none of these attributes have much to do with designing buildings, but we can see a pattern in how Johnson has used them to stay in the middle of things, and at the top. "My role is I'm influential," Johnson says, "not powerful. They say powerful. They being Peter Eisenman, who does it for other reasons. We have to get Peter's motives straight, and his motives are Peter." But he has made a self-deprecating distinction without a difference. His influence *is* power.

Johnson has achieved this influence by being a rich, charming insider with a knack for bringing in outsiders—a cynic would say co-opting them—at just the right moment. He was born with a combination of social



MASTER: Someday Philip Johnson will no longer rule American architecture—he has many pretenders but no successor.

fluency and money that allowed him to deal as an equal with the people who could commission houses, museum wings and corporate headquarters. Securely embedded in that world, he could also afford, both financially and in terms of status, to champion European cranks and oddball "kids." Add to that his silken antennae, his gregariousness and his calculated but winning candor about commerce and art, and you have the perfect architecture broker. And like any broker, Johnson thrives on action, on change.

Johnson goes the broker one better—Leo Castelli

may sell paintings, but no one thinks he painted them. The genius of the modernists reflected back on Johnson. As for the kids, Stern makes Johnson's role quite clear: "Since he's much older and so established, he often had the opportunity to realize the ideas of various people that [without him] could only be confined to drawings or small projects or the odd museum show." In other words, Johnson the broker was perfectly situated in the middle, between those who commissioned buildings and those who wanted to design them. Instead of stepping aside when he had found a match of customer

and style, however, Johnson often designed the buildings himself. He acknowledges, for example, that the AT&T building grew out of ideas that had arisen in conversations with Stern and drawings by Graves. While the kids' ideas came first, their well-known buildings came later.

"THE INTERESTING QUESTION," Peter Eisenman says, "is what will happen when Philip is not in the chair. He's held everyone together." The fact is that no one person will be able to do all the things Johnson has done. Meier may build the portentous white modern forms to which Johnson aspired earlier in his career; Graves may work the artsy and corporate sides of the street; Stern may build rich people's summer homes and schmooze and charm; Eisenman may have his day as a slightly deranged would-be Mies; but no one will be the broker-curator-builder-founder-of-movements-cynic-idealist-rich guy that Johnson has been. We needn't worry, though, for at the moment Johnson is carrying on perfectly well. Just a few months ago an architect who has made a career out of avoiding Johnson's influence received a phone call from him. The call came one morning as the architect slept. When he brought the receiver to his ear, he heard the whimsical voice that had whispered the same words to so many talented young men so many times over so many years. "Hello, this is Philip Johnson," the voice began. "I want to talk to you about your future." A few days later, Johnson and the architect had lunch at The Four Seasons. ☛

A Special Bonus Excerpt from the New Spy Book!

SPY HIGH

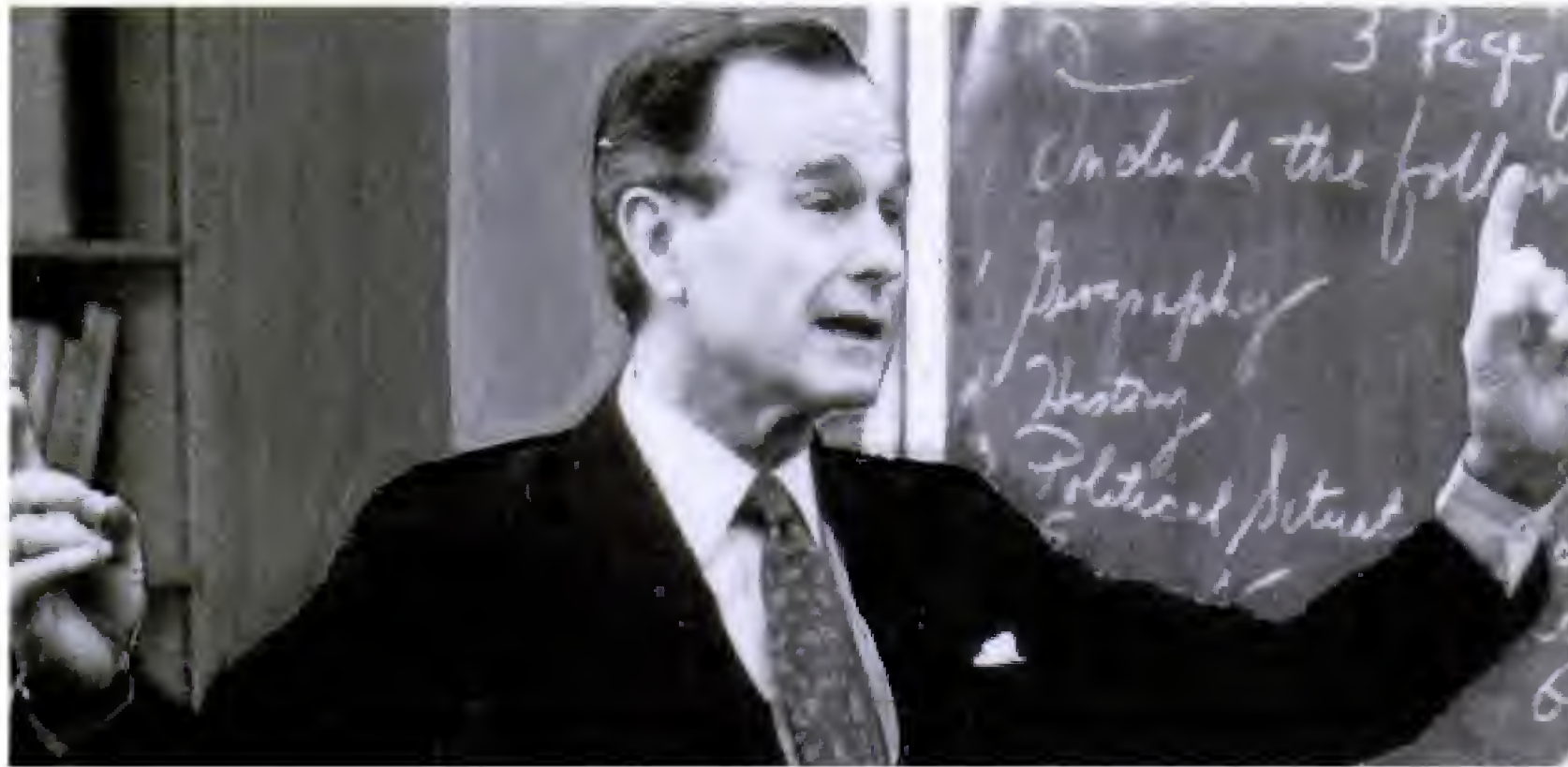


Life is like high school, only with more money, a wise person once said. You remember high school—snobs and jocks and nerds and brownnosers insanely obsessed with looks, clothes, dates, popularity and parties. You see today's celebrities—snobs and jocks and nerds and brownnosers insanely obsessed with looks, clothes, dates, popularity and parties. Welcome to *SPY High*—the make-believe yearbook of our Peter Pans from hell, America's perpetual teenagers: the rich and famous.

SPY High, written by the editors of *spy* and designed by Alexander Isley Design, will be published by Doubleday in May.



FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION



Mr. Bush, Principal



"Why, yes, Stumpy, I guess Shakespeare would have been rich if he could have written for the movies." Mr. Plimpton of the English Department discusses issues in literature with senior Henry Kravis.



Mr. Souter,
Math Department



Mr. O'Connor,
Foreign Languages (Latin)



Miss Moore,
Physical Education



Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Social Studies



"Von day you'll get up da rope, Dahnny." Mr. Schwarzenegger of the Phys Ed Department offers encouragement to spunky sophomore Danny DeVito.



Miss Smith, Cafeteria lady



Mr. List,
Custodian



Mr. Dukakis,
Driver Education
(department chairman)



STUDENT LIFE



Noogies! Sophomore Peter Maas gives 'em to classmate P. J. O'Rourke.



"And this is your brain on drugs." Mr. Donahue of the Guidance Department gives his annual lecture on drug abuse.



To Student Council representative Bill Bradley, even the opinions of the lowliest freshman are important. Here, frosh Paul Simon complains about a bunch of impolite bigger kids who keep calling him Wiggy.



"You're late again, mister!" Seldom have these words meant so little so often as they have to the chronically tardy junior Keith Richards.



Senior exchange student Ivana Trump, chairperson of the Homecoming Float Committee, demonstrates how homecoming floats are displayed in her native Czechoslovakia.



"Four more payments and she's all mine!" Junior Leonard "Cat Litter" Stern shows off his date to the junior prom.



"Hey, doll, check this out. I made it into Remedial Reading!" Good going, senior Andy Silverstein!



Ready, set, spit! Although most students thought senior Dave Letterman would win the watermelon-seed-spitting contest at the Spring Picnic, the event was captured by senior Mike Ovitz, shown here launching his winning pod.



If you're not part of the solution... When cutbacks forced layoffs in the cafeteria staff, Mr. Dukakis of the Driver's Ed Department eagerly chipped in and helped. Everyone appreciated his use of surgical gloves. "Germs," Mr. Dukakis has said time and time again, "are bad."

SENIORS



CARL BERNSTEIN

"Meet me in the field, behind the dynamo." —Bruce Springsteen
"Carlo"...Boss loafers...Won: New Jersey Award—for spending so much time in Elizabeth...Ambition: to be important enough to get free invitations to nightclubs.
Dance to Help El Salvador 2; The Mercury (reporter) 1,2,3



TINA BROWN

"What is the use of a book, thought Alice, without pictures or conversations?" —L. Carroll
"Lotta Headlights"... "Guess who I'm having dinner with?"... Loves: *People* magazine, 1970s movie stars, Tab, the philosophy of Dale Carnegie... "What do you mean, 'the little people'?"
Twirlers 2; Literary Magazine



CHEVY CHASE

"What, me worry?" —Alfred E. Neuman
"Smoothie"... Will never forget: mucho good times in the boys' room sophomore year... Lives for vacations... "Hey, pass the Nachos!"... Ambition: "Just to be the best at something."
AY Squad 1; Tennis 2,3; Cinephiles 2,3,4



MADONNA LOUISE CICCONNE

"Purity is the ability to contemplate defilement." —Simone Weil
"No, it's just 'Madonna'"... "Like a virgin" (yeah, right—good memory)... Brought out the beast in S.P. and the dork in W.B.... Nice, uh, cones... "I'm, like, in charge of my life, okay?"... Ambition: unlimited.
Jazzercise, Photo Club (model)



ALFONSE D'AMATO

To T.P., B.D., Sal, Sonny, Armand, Lou at the gas station and Father O'Connor—you're the best. AAAYYYY!!!! I MADE IT.
"Fonzo"... "Howyadoin'?"... Cherishes: memories of after-school job allocating lockers... "See Fonzo. Offer him two bucks"... Goal: civil service.
Football 1; Road Rally 4



ROBERT DE NIRO

"Bobby."



JESSE JACKSON

"A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times."
—Oliver Wendell Holmes
"The Rev"... "I am somebody!" (for sure)... The Main Man at pep rallies: "Defense! Defense! That's no jive! Kick some butt! Keep hope alive!"... Ambition: to be principal of SPY High.



EDWARD KENNEDY

"How dry I am. How wet I'll be, if I don't find the bathroom key."
—Trad.
"Teddy"... He gets around... He's got Jack's charm and Bobby's fervor/But if he drives you home, bring a life preserver. (Just kidding!)... Loves: chicks, boiler-makers, his family.
Student Council, Football



MICHAEL KINSLEY

"The worst of doing one's duty was that it apparently unfitted one for doing anything else."
—Edith Wharton
"Weenie"... Nicely groomed... In scholarship he's beyond compare/But wake up, Mike, there's girls out there!... Ambition: to teach and earn six figures.
The Mercury, Debate Society



MARILYN QUAYLE

"Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration."
—Thomas Edison
Teacher's pet... "You are so immature!"... Favorite moods: bossy, high-strung.
National Honor Society, Library Bake Sale, Prom Committee (Decorations Committee co-chairperson), Field Hockey



AL SHARPTON

"Perhaps there is no happiness in life so perfect as the martyr's."
—O. Henry
"The Mound of Sound"... Got his photo in every issue of *The Mercury*... "You gonna finish those fries?"... "OUTRAGEous!"
Grooming Club 1; Wrestling 1; Bible Study Group 1; Black Students Union 2,3,4



GORDON SUMNER

"The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."
—T. S. Eliot
"Stinger"... King of Pain, King of Schmain!... Voted Student Most Likely to Misuse Big Words in Public... Ambition: to be really liked by all the black students.
Love-the-Planet Society 4

Senior Superlatives

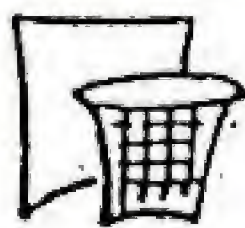
CLASS BRAINIACS

George Will and Susan Sontag



GAVE MOST WEDGIES

Don "Stinky" Trump



GOT MOST WEDGIES

Woody Allen

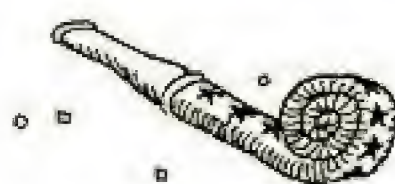


Senior Prom

Class of 1991 Prom Theme:
NOTHING COMPARES 2—US!



Lose a bet, Sylvester? Stallone showed up with a surprise date—the Science Department's Mrs. Schroeder.



"Show me how to make a clean right cross, and then I'll be a really famous writer!" Seniors Jay McInerney and Norman Mailer horsing around between dances!



"Hey, bud, move along if you don't got your ticket ready." Many thanks are in order to Don "Stinky" Trump, who filled in at the last minute for class treasurer Mike Milken as prom comptroller.



"Hey, aren't you the one I caught tryin' to sneak in here before? Get lost, ya runt!"



"If she don't pay, she don't get in the door." Stinky made a dandy ticket taker!



"Y'see, I wear my cowboy boots and jeans with a tux jacket!" Senior Ralph Lauren explains his personal promwear philosophy to enthralled classmates.

ACTIVITIES

Future Cosmetologists of America



Senior Shirley Lord, club president, practices public lipstick application.

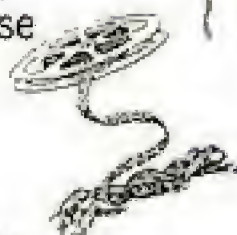


Because beauty is not democratically distributed, club members are encouraged to try to see the world through others' eyes. Here, sophomores Brooke Shields and Christie Brinkley engage in a day-long "Disfigured Like Me" experiment designed to yield insights about the plight of the beauty-impaired.

AV Squad



"Okay, now, if George starts yakking too much, I'll tug on my ear, and then Marty'll start the projector." AV Squad officers, from left: junior Sydney Pollack (treasurer), junior George Lucas (vice president), senior Steven Spielberg (president) and sophomore Martin Scorsese (secretary).



Ping-Pong Club



This club, popular with freshmen and other less-confident students, provides a safe haven for students to work off stress with a paddle and a little white ball. Here, perennial Ping-Pong Club president Bernie Goetz presides over a meeting of one.

Twirlers



Heave-ho! Twirler boys Emilio Estevez and Charlie Sheen hoist their spangled cargo—twirler Jo Anne Worley of the junior class—toward the opposing school's locker room! Sis-boom-baaaaah!



"JO-EY! JO-EY!" Superskinny senior baton twirler Joey Heatherton looks like she was born in this after-hours Twirler caftan, suitable for bonfire pep rallies, parent-teacher conferences or après-school hot chocolate.

Western Heritage Day



Pioneers in the Wild West wore elaborate headgear decorated with feathers or fur. Here, ultrapopular junior Loni Anderson wears a hat festooned with eagle feathers, while Burt Reynolds wears a headpiece festooned with strands of human hair.



In a moving tribute to Native Americans, senior Marilyn Quayle wears a tepee hat that she designed herself.



Hall Monitors



Sophomore Sean Penn helps maintain order on school property.

Helping Hands

Community-Service-Minded Students Say, "Do Unto Others as You Would Pay Them to Do Unto You."



The Toys-for-Tots Committee finally persuaded senior Donald "Stinky" Trump to part with a toy airplane.



Senior Patricia Buckley, Helping Hands president, supervises as boyfriend Bill stuffs celery with peanut butter for the gala Crudités-for-the-Homeless campaign.



At Circus Day, seniors Mike Milken (not yet in costume) and Stumpy Kravis meet in the school parking lot to rehearse their wacky ten-guys-climbing-out-of-a-Lamborghini act.

Future Administrative Assistants



Student teacher Miss Sawyer of the English Department, the club's faculty adviser, shows freshman Debbie Gibson how to dial with wet nails.



Sophomore Judd Nelson was honored with the Victor Mature Thespian-of-the-Year Award. The Great Nelsoni, as his pals call him, was cited for his dedication and versatility.

Nelson as the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*...



as Torvald in *A Doll's House*...



as Horatio in *Hamlet*...



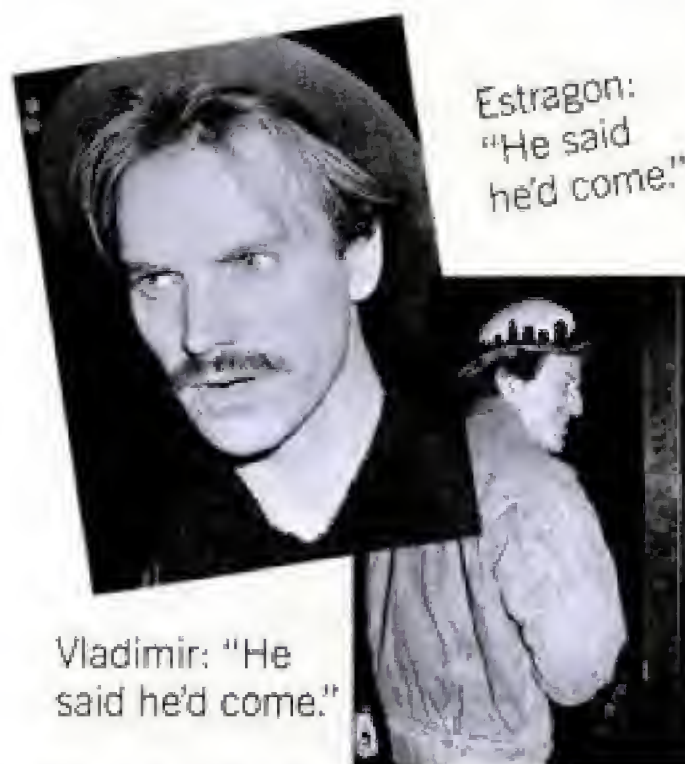
as Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*...



and as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*.



The Thespian Society



Vladimir: "He said he'd come."

Estragon: "He said he'd come."

Waiting for Godot, by Samuel Beckett. Directed by Thespian Society president Kevin Kline
 Vladimir Mortimer Zuckerman
 Estragon Gordon Sumner
 Pozzo Si Newhouse
 Lucky Robert Gottlieb



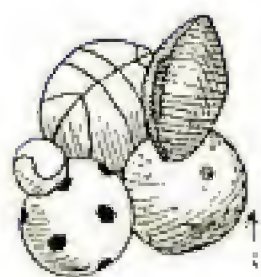
"**STEL-LA!**" Senior Julian Schnabel's Stanley was pure brute!

A Streetcar Named Desire, by Tennessee Williams. Directed by Thespian Society president Kevin Kline
 Stanley Kowalski . . . Julian Schnabel
 Blanche DuBois Shirley Lord
 Stella Tama Janowitz
 Mitch Judd Nelson

1991 Thespian-of-the-Year Award

SPORTS

Basketball



Senior Mort Zuckerman is the only veteran on the squad. Previously a seldom-used mop-up specialist, Mort bought the team and was soon starting every game for the Pit Bulls.



He's slow, can't jump, gets all blotchy in the face if he has to run a lot, and doesn't score much. But senior Mario Cuomo is a competitor.

Baseball



Shortstop Paul Simon of the freshman class was a revelation in the infield. Though Paul hit an anemic .067, his tiny strike zone enabled him to lead the team in walks.

Golf



Friends feel that team captain Dan Quayle of the junior class could have a terrific career as a golf pro ahead of him, provided he doesn't get sidetracked into some kind of desk job.



Wrestling



"Okay, so I'm on all fours, and now you straddle me, right?" Senior Warren Beatty went out for the squad but quit when he discovered the matches weren't coed.



Big Mike Eisner was the real star of this year's feisty team.

Cheerleading

As we all know, being popular is one of the most important things in life, and what better barometer of popularity than cheerleading tryouts? Go, team!



Senior Pat Buckley: "Lean to the right/Lean to the right/Stand up, sit down/Fight! Fight! Fight!"



Junior Sally Kirkland: "Shot glass, rocks glass, martini glass, tumbler/Come on, Pit Bulls, make him a fumbler!"



Senior Madonna Ciccone: "Push 'em back! Shove 'em back!/Hit 'em in the balls and then/Tell 'em that they'll never/Work in this town again!"

Gymnastics



Senior Mick Jagger does his thing on the trampoline.



Senior mini-tramp tyro Sandra Bernhard limbers up before the meet with some leg lifts.

Nothing, it seems, can rescue Orion Pictures

from its chronic cash shortage—not a history of classiness, not Woody Allen, not a billionaire backer, not even *Dances With Wolves*. MARK LASSWELL looks at the debt-addled, incompetently managed studio where things have got so bad that even the Japanese are in no hurry to take over from

Tycoons



BY ALL RIGHTS ORION PICTURES SHOULD BE BASKING IN THE GLOW OF HOTNESS. *DANCES With Wolves*, a film that no other studio would touch, won seven Oscars at this year's Academy Awards. *The Silence of the Lambs* was the first certifiable hit of 1991. Earlier this year, Orion had 13 films in simultaneous production, a company record. And, of course, Orion is where Woody makes his movies. But while practically any other studio would be toasting its good fortune, anticipating a windfall at the box office and additional clout at its spring-time deal-making sessions, Orion's executives are literally begging for cash and selling off valuable studio assets as if presiding over a going-out-of-business sale—which they may very well be.

The combination of managerial boneheadedness and a succession of pricey clunkers (beginning in 1989 with *Valmont*, *Great Balls of Fire* and *She-Devil* and continuing through last summer with *RoboCop 2*, *Cadillac Man*, *Navy SEALs* and *State of Grace*) has left Orion in humiliatingly bad financial shape: debts have run up above \$500 million (from \$165-

million five years ago), the company's stock price has plummeted to less than half what it was last spring, and Standard & Poor's has lowered the company's rating from B to B- to CCC+, a grade that classifies Orion's bonds as speculative.

And so the recent spate of good news is tempered by the consequences of the shortsighted deals the studio has been obliged to make to remedy its chronic shortage of funds. Sure, *Dances With Wolves* generated revenues of \$122 million in the United States, but Orion never owned the film's foreign rights, which could equal or surpass the domestic take. Furthermore, the studio, desperate for cash, last year sold the foreign video rights to 50 of its films to

Orion has Woody Allen, Kevin Costner and the *RoboCop* series—and, alas, production president Marc Platt (at left, with doll).



the Sony subsidiary Columbia Pictures for \$175 million — a good deal for the Japanese, since one *Dances*-caliber blockbuster alone could eventually make that much in overseas video revenues. Orion won't get much of *The Silence of the Lambs*'s profits either: desperate for cash, the studio last year made a deal with its majority shareholder, Metromedia chairman John Kluge, in which Kluge was promised a substantial cut off the top of any profits from the film *Mermaids* in return for an immediate \$23 million cash infusion; in the event that *Mermaids*'s receipts proved disappointing — which they did — Kluge would skim off some of the profits from *Lambs*. As for the studio's record-setting production slate, well, now it seems that 13 films is more than Orion can handle: desperate for cash, the studio sold the rights to *The Addams Family* to Paramount Pictures and is shopping around four other unreleased films — *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure II*, *RoboCop 3*, *The Favor* and *There Goes My Baby*.

The one consolation for Orion's current management is that investors are easily wowed, and the studio's recent Academy Award successes have rallied Orion's stock well above its pre-*Dances* low of \$6.88 a share (but still well below its February 1990 peak of \$23.50). So now, when some Far Eastern electronics behemoth ingests Orion in anticipation of the (unproven) bonanza that will result from having the new owner's name on movies being played on VCRs and television sets that already bear the company's name, or when some publishing-theme-park-film-production colossus picks up the studio simply for its library and distribution system, Orion executives — those who hold company stock, anyway — will enjoy a fine payday before being told to get lost.

"When somebody buys that company," says a representative for an interested buyer, "they're going to have to recapitalize it ferociously and basically restaff it."

One buyout scenario has Sony purchasing the studio and installing the management of Castle Rock Entertainment, the small, smart film-and-TV-production company founded in 1987 by the director Rob Reiner and four other partners. The stylish Castle Rock is one-third owned by Columbia, whose stake in the stylish Orion's foreign rights makes Sony a logical acquirer of both studios. Someone familiar with Sony's negotiations with Salomon Brothers, the investment-banking concern retained by Orion to find new sources of capital, says Castle Rock managing partner Alan Horn will run Orion if the deal goes through. (A Castle Rock takeover would also create the fascinating possibility that Woody Allen would have to report to his worshiper and onetime imitator Reiner. "Rob would have an orgasm if Woody had to pitch his story ideas to him," says a former Castle Rock employee.)

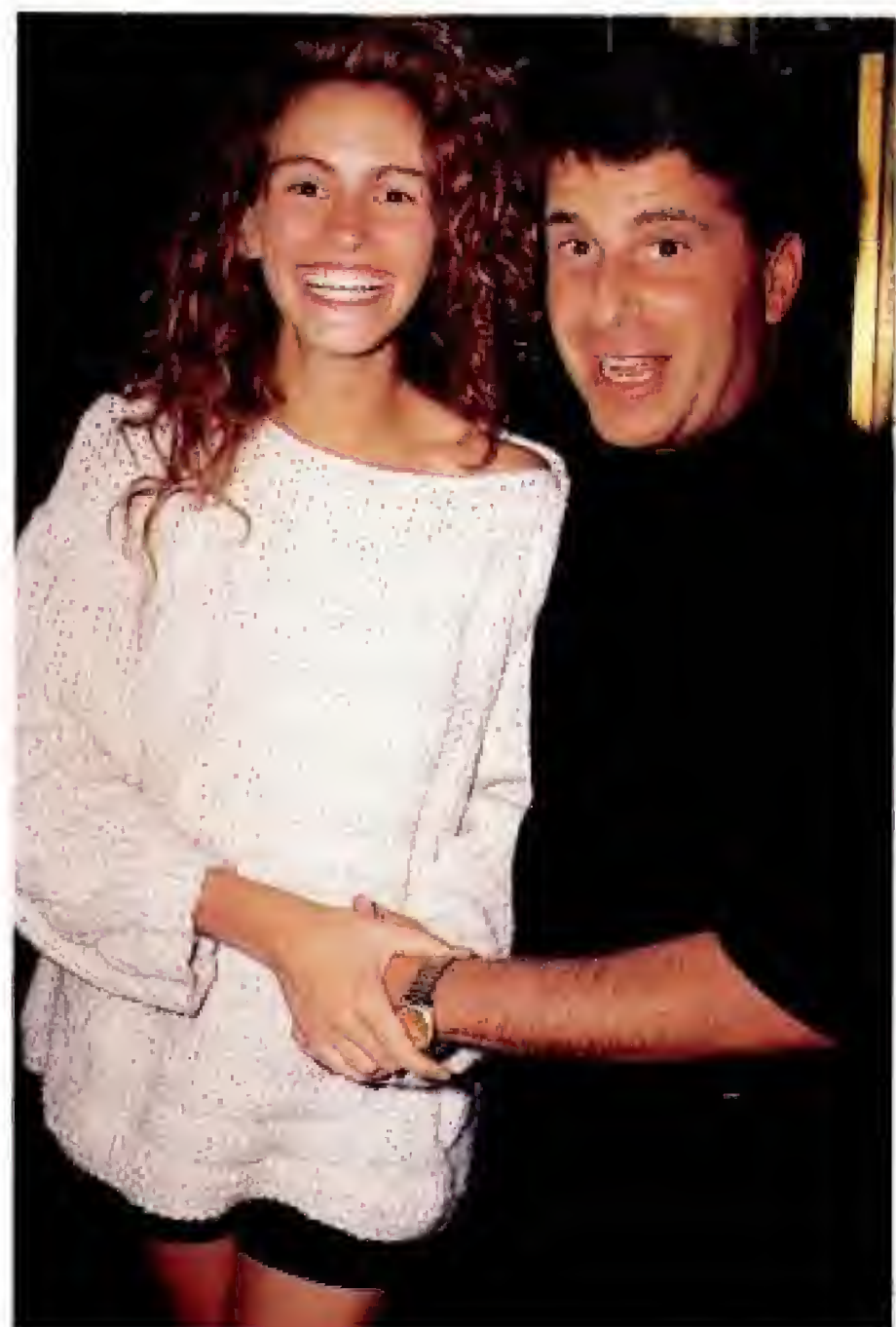
The personnel purge is deemed necessary because Orion's remaining founders — Arthur Krim, Eric Pleskow and William Bernstein — are seen as out-of-touch old-timers, while the younger of the studio's helmsmen, the executives who are supposed to lead Orion into the twenty-first century, are considered by their peers to be timeserving twits better suited to the business-affairs department than the creative head office. Take, for example, production president Marc Platt, who landed in his job last spring after Mike Medavoy, another of Orion's founding partners, was sacrificed to placate stockholders who were aghast at the Old Guard's sudden propensity for green-lighting bombs of the *Everybody Wins* ilk.

As Orion's new high-profile schmoozer — in casinos they call them greeters; in Hollywood they call them presidents — Platt, a senior vice president, was called upon to be the point man in the studio's relations with actors, directors and producers. It was a task handled expertly by Medavoy, a well-connected former agent who now heads

Credits and debits: For every Orion megahit like The Silence of the Lambs there have been umpteen failures of the She-Devil kind; for every Dances With Wolves, a litany of Lone Wolf McQuades.



"THE PEOPLE WE MET FROM ORION WERE THE
OF TWO RECENT ORION PICTURES. "THEY SEEM



Columbia's Tri-Star subsidiary. But Platt, only 33 and without much of a show biz pedigree, seemed ill suited to kiss up to his artists and assemble an impressive display of photographs of himself with famous people, as Medavoy did. And so Platt's elevation, along with his youth, ready smile, reddish-blond hair and general greenness, earned him a special nickname in the industry: the Dan Quayle of Hollywood. "I would never in a million years talk to Marc Platt and think he had an original opinion about anything having to do with the movies," says a former associate.

The nickname may be generous to Quayle: Platt has a knack for office intrigue and politicking. One former assistant remembers receiving orders from Platt to sneak into another executive's office and steal a copy of a study the executive had written; Platt was supposed to give a speech on the same topic and apparently planned to pass off his colleague's conveniently assembled research as his own. But the assistant, aware of Platt's talent for Byzantine office string-pulling, realized that even though Platt might have fully intended to appropriate his colleague's work, it was equally likely that he had gone to the paper's author and arranged the heist as a loyalty test, to see what the assistant would do. So the assistant respectfully declined the mission and kept busy with more ordinary tasks, like reading movie scripts and providing Platt with opinions on them.

SE SMILEY IDIOTS FROM THE PLANET GONG," SAYS A VETERAN TO HAVE THE WRONG IDEA OF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO MAKE MOVIES"

"I don't think he would really try to hurt anyone," the former assistant says now. "But at the same time, he doesn't think stepping on people's heads to get where he wants to go is really hurting them."

And now that Platt has got where he wants to go — having ridden to an executive position that calls on him, for the first time in his life, to do more than be bright-eyed and boyish around older men — he's in way over his head. Upon his ascension to the production presidency, Platt revamped the production staff and threw his immediate support behind *Clifford*,

a comedy starring Martin Short as a ten-year-old child, and *The Addams Family* and *Car 54, Where Are You?*, two remakes of 1960s television shows. Platt's relentlessly adolescent tastes seem to have convinced many in the movie community that

Orion can never again hit its mid-eighties stride, when *Amadeus* (1984) and *Platoon* (1986) won best-picture Oscars and the studio, synonymous with *class* — remember Woody! — was turning out hits consistently.

"[Platt's] pretty bad," says the producer of one of Orion's biggest recent hits. "He seems nervous...like a guy thrust into a job that might be bigger than him." A production-crew veteran of two recent Orion pictures has an even harsher estimate of Platt and his staff. "The people we met from Orion were these smiley kind of idiots from the planet Gong," he says. "If they got a decent crew in there, they could probably turn the company around, but they seem to have the wrong idea of what it's like to make movies."

That's a particularly galling criticism of the company founded in 1978 by Krim, Pleskow, Bernstein, Medavoy and the late Robert Benjamin. If anyone knew what it took to get movies made, Krim and Benjamin did. In 1951 the two of them, both smart, ambitious, well-connected lawyers, took over the failing United Artists company and promptly established a paradigm of low-overhead, artist-friendly studio management.

At the time, Hollywood was reeling from the Supreme Court's 1948 antitrust Consent Decree, which required big studios such as Paramount and MGM to divest themselves of the theater chains they owned and that they held captive to relentlessly mediocre but profitable and cheaply made formula pictures. The decree, along with the attrition of movie audiences caused by the advent of television, left the mammoth companies with the ruinously expensive trappings of studio film production — back lots, prop shops, warehouses, unionized technical staff and contracted players — but no reason to keep the machine churning. United Artists, though badly managed and losing money, wasn't saddled with production facilities or union agreements. Krim and Benjamin quickly exploited their company's advantages over the bigger, richer studios. Under their direction the New York-based company financed projects in exchange for distribution profits, which were

shared with independent producers who hired their own crews, cut their own deals with unions and never had to worry about being fleeced with studio overhead charges. To the professionals recently cut loose from the studio system, UA offered creative freedom and a chance to make money.

While the studio usually reserved the right to approve every aspect of a production — from the script, director and cast to the music, locations and labs — UA had neither a cash surplus nor an elaborate supervision system to monitor the productions it was financing. As a consequence, the ability of UA (and later Orion, which shares many of the same traits) to come up with successful projects hung on the ability of studio production executives to approve competent production teams and make the most of their limited supervision of the projects. When the formula worked, as it often did in the 27 years that Krim and Benjamin ran UA, the company produced classics and near classics such as *High Noon*, *The African Queen*, *Marty*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *Last Tango in Paris*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Annie Hall*.

The studio changed ownership in 1967 when Krim and Benjamin exchanged their UA stock for shares in the Transamerica conglomerate (making \$8 million apiece along the way), but the pair — along with the younger executives Pleskow and Bernstein, who joined up in the 1950s, and Medavoy, who came into the fold in 1974 — continued to run the company for Transamerica until 1978. Then, having lost a bid to recast their agreement with the parent company, the quintet bolted UA and started over again. It took them four years

So this is what Mr. Medavoy was doing while I was minding the spreadsheets: Platt tries to stay calm in the presence of an actual film star, Julia Roberts.



We three kings of Orion are... (left to right) Arthur Krim, William Bernstein and Eric Pleskow, 3,000 miles from Hollywood

view with Oliver Stone, whose film *Platoon* was distributed by Orion, in which Stone blasted Hollywood executives as "cock-sucker vampires." The producer, visiting Orion's Century City offices shortly after he'd read

the piece, found the studio's executives "running up and down the halls gleefully going, 'Look what he's calling us now!' It was kind of like, well, you can't touch these people, because they own everything." The producer also recalls an instance in which a partner at Orion—the same studio that patted itself on the back for distributing *Mississippi Burning*, a film about the 1964 murders of the civil-rights workers Goodman, Schwerner and Chaney—told him that "the reason we don't make more black films is the owners of these nice theaters don't want all these Negroes coming to see the movies." But a truly sensitive and globally

conscious studio executive knows his movies can do only so much for the world, anyway: "You know what would be more

WHEN ORION IS SOLD AND/OR DISMANTLED, EXPECT A GREAT MEDIA WAILING OVER THE DEMISE OF THE SENSITIVE STUDIO—WOODY'S STUDIO—THAT WAS JUST TOO GOOD TO LIVE IN THE BLOODLESS WORLD OF SUPERCONGLOMERATED MOVIE-MAKING

to establish Orion as a studio with its own distribution system, but when Krim, Pleskow, Bernstein and Medavoy finally got the new enterprise under way in 1982 (Benjamin died in 1979), they brought with them a reputation for nimble good judgment, for picking talented producers and directors and allowing them to make idiosyncratic movies that the public usually turned out to want to see. And they also brought Woody Allen with them.

It sometimes seems that Orion's very existence depends on Allen and the reverence he inspires in Hollywood. Unlike most studios, whose duds are not easily forgiven, Orion has always been able to hush industry criticism of howlers like *Yellowbeard*, *Cheech & Chong's The Corsican Brothers*, *Lone Wolfe McQuade* and *Starfight One* with a single, casual reference to Allen. Hollywood is cowed by Allen not because of the money his movies make (at \$18.2 million in domestic rentals, *Hannah and Her Sisters* is his most successful effort to date), nor because of his talent for making movies Vincent Canby really, really likes, but largely because of the deal he commands from Krim. Since it's every Hollywood resident's dream to make a studio sit up and beg, Allen's blanket power over every aspect of his productions (*Not happy with the first version of September, Woody? Hey, that's okay—reshoot the whole thing!*) spellbinds even those who haven't seen a Woody Allen movie since *Manhattan*.

For Orion, the arrangement with Allen is a more or less financially painless way to maintain the linchpin of the company's reputation for being a studio that makes important films and reveres its artists. (When Orion is sold and/or dismantled, expect a great media wailing over the demise of the sensitive studio—Woody's studio—that was just too good to live in the bloodless world of demographics-obsessed, superconglomerated moviemaking.)

It's worth noting that Orion's reputation for class and humility has always been a trifle overstated. One producer recalls reading an inter-

viewing to me than winning an Academy Award?," Medavoy once said to an interviewer. "A true and verifiable missile freeze. I think it would also be more exciting for my partners."

At the time, 1987, Medavoy could afford to speak glibly about Oscars; Orion movies had earned 18 nominations that year, and the studio was in relatively good shape. Indeed, the company appeared finally to have recaptured the old UA magic. "There are people who call my agent to propose the same deal I have with Orion—just with more money," said Allen, riding relatively high with *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Radio Days*. "But you can sleep nights if you have a deal with Arthur Krim."

Last summer, with Orion's fortunes sagging and the 81-year-old Krim still at the helm, Allen started making inquiries. *How about the same deal I have with Orion*, he proposed to Disney, *just with more money?* Disney, desperate to acquire a more serious reputation but accustomed to running its pictures with studio spies swarming over the sets and executive hatchet men waiting in the wings, said yes to the money part but no to the part about complete creative control. Allen, needless to say, scurried back to Orion, but not before picking up \$3-million for his shticky, one-note performance in Disney's horribly bad *Scenes from a Mall*.

Even though Allen returned to the fold, the

episode demonstrated just how wobbly Orion had become. The studio's managerial ineptitude was wearing out the patience of Kluge, whose Metromedia Inc. had bought nearly 60 percent of Orion in 1988 as a favor to his friend Krim after the company had been buffeted by a series of hostile takeover bids. The options he exercised last fall increased Metromedia's stake to 64 percent, which, depending on how you look at it, represents either an intensifying effort to keep Orion alive or a consolidation of undervalued stock in anticipation of making a killing.

The last five years have not been kind to independent filmmaking companies. Cannon Films, Vestron, Atlantic, Dino De Laurentiis Entertainment Group and New World have all gone under. In the meantime, the big studios have been scooped up by even bigger owners who can afford to pay absurdly high sums for hot scripts and then spend even higher sums on production and marketing. Unable to bid with the big boys or, as in the past, outsmart them, Orion now seems forced to troll for the dregs of the script pile—how else to explain *Madhouse*, with John Larroquette?

Even if the company ponied up the money necessary to compete, Orion would be undone by a failure of *Days of Thunder* proportions, while a studio supported by a gargantuan Japanese entity would simply consider it the cost of doing business. And if Orion becomes the property of a gargantuan Japanese entity, it's still possible that it will be undone; the studio's distribution system and library of more than 800 movies and television episodes could easily be grafted onto another studio or sold off individually.





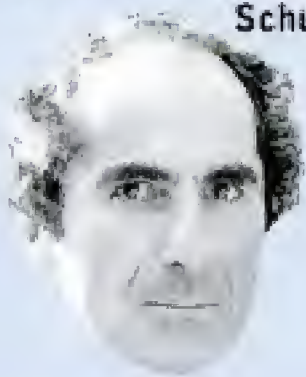


It's also possible that the Orion name will linger for years, just as United Artists flickered at the end of MGM-UA for nearly a decade until Giancarlo Parretti's Pathé Communications knocked it off last November. UA, it will be remembered, was the studio undone by *Heaven's Gate* in 1981. Although director Michael Cimino was the main culprit, the management of UA took more than a passive hand in the studio's destruction: they approved blatantly flawed projects and then panicked when trouble started; they were unable to establish a creative agenda; and they coasted on their studio's fast-tarnishing reputation. In other words, UA was ripe for a *Heaven's Gate*. A decade later, so is Orion Pictures. Only this time, Krim and company are still in charge.

Regardless of whom you talk to, the octogenarian Krim, titan of silver-screen history though he may be, is the source of Orion's troubles—either because he's too old to still

VANITY, THY NAME IS JAGUAR

Orion's Fellow Practitioners of the Prestige-vs.-Profit Trade-off

As Orion's majority stockholder, John Kluge is effectively the sponsor of an enormous vanity project: the studio makes him no money, but its support of risk-taking artists—particularly short, nebbishy artists partial to making talky, commercially unsuccessful film homages to Bergman and Chekhov—affords Kluge and the studio incalculable prestige. Below, some vanity projects in other fields.

VANITY PROJECT	SPONSOR	PRESTIGE FACTORS	UNPROFITABILITY
<i>The Atlantic</i> 	Mort Zuckerman	Boston-based; publishes fiction, poetry, think pieces; regular contributions from James Fallows and Conor Cruise O'Brien	Has cost Zuckerman millions since he purchased the magazine in 1980
Jaguar PLC 	Ford Motor Company	Manufactures sleek, sporty cars; design facilities and assembly plants located in England; automobiles popular with physicians	Lost about \$100-million in 1990
The Empire Builder, Amtrak's rail service from Chicago to Seattle 	Amtrak, federal government	Evokes golden age of rail travel and robber-baronage; had an NBC radio program named after it in 1930s; offers stunning views of Montana's Bear Paw Mountains	Customer fares cover only 72 percent of operating expenses; government subsidies make up difference
Philadelphia 	State of Pennsylvania, federal government	Site of signing of Declaration of Independence; good art museum; enormous walk-through replica of human heart at Franklin Institute; Main Line society; houses along Schuylkill River strung with pretty Christmas lights	Financially insolvent; faces \$230 million budget deficit
Philip Roth 	Simon & Schuster	Considered an American treasure; wrote not just a ground-breaking, generation-defining novel but a ground-breaking, generation-defining trilogy; married to Claire Bloom	Was paid \$1.8-million in 1989 to write three new books even though his former publisher paid him only \$160,000 or so per book—and just broke even
Mounted police 	New York City	Appear extremely authoritative; horses are attractive and make pleasant <i>clap-clap</i> sound when performing crowd-control duties at demonstrations; evocative of days when men wore bushy side-whiskers	Are paid same base salary as patrolmen in cars, yet take longer to arrive at scene
Antlers 	Bull moose	Are used to combat competitors and thereby win over does during breeding season	Are shed each winter, after taking as long as four months to grow and weighing as much as 85 pounds

be running things or because he's not in charge and no one with talent has taken his place.

The longtime consensus in Hollywood is that Orion has never lived up to its promise because Krim and Pleskow, the company's 67-year-old chief executive officer, continue to operate out of New York and refuse to cede any power to anyone in Hollywood. Furthermore, Orion has been undercapitalized since its inception, resulting in a seat-of-the-pants management style that raises quick cash but mortgages the company's future. Any new owner, industry observers are now saying, would immediately jettison Orion's management, from Krim on down, and move the company to Los Angeles.

But a producer who has worked with Orion senses that some management power has already flowed to the West Coast, simply by default. Krim, he reports, is more inclined these days to reminisce about old battles and past glories than to lead marketing-strategy sessions for *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure II*.

"You want to grab a handkerchief and wipe his chin," the producer says of Krim. "He isn't drooling, but there is a sense of a very old man who is maybe very far out of it."

Because Pleskow's recent ill health has limited his involvement in the day-to-day running of the business, much of Orion's decision-making is now being done by William Bernstein, the 57-year-old executive vice president. Having bragged for years about the number of influential show business lawyers he has trained, Bernstein projects a Bush-like

semblance of competence. The accolades given to *Dances With Wolves* and *The Silence of the Lambs* make the studio a more appealing buy-out target. (A few months ago a representative for Samsung, the Korean electronics company rumored to be interested in buying Orion, dismissed the studio as an "empty can.")

But the studio's greatest hope for survival lies in the story of how it acquired the distribution rights to *Dances With Wolves*. As is inevitably the case these days in any Hollywood tale of big money, important power and brazen coercion, all narrative threads lead to Creative Artists Agency archon Michael Ovitz. When Kevin Costner became disenchanted with the William Morris Agency in early 1988, word reached Ovitz, who wasted no time in courting Costner's business. A year of casual exchanges began, during which it became known that Costner particularly wanted to star in and direct a three-hour western, written by a friend of his, in which Costner and several unknown Native American actors would spend a good deal of time speaking in

OVITZ PROMISED ORION FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FROM CAA'S ROSTER OF STARS

authentic Lakota dialect—an idea that would give any

obedience, an impression that he's delighted it's finally, finally his turn to run things after years of loyal service—which only encourages the Hollywood equation of his right-hand man Platt and Dan Quayle.

Before he came to Orion, Platt was a business-affairs lawyer for International Creative Management's superagent Sam Cohn (Cohn is Woody Allen's agent, and Cohn's son, as it happens, was married to Pleskow's daughter during most of the 1980s), laying the essential groundwork of entertainment contacts. He's more politically astute than he lets on, and his utter lack of ideas about movies could serve to reassure insecure artists that he'll stay well clear of their turf.

Anyone requiring proof of Platt's creative bankruptcy need look no further than the 1987 movie *Campus Man*, the sole film-production credit of Orion's current president of film production. In his role as *Campus Man*'s executive producer, Platt presided over the laff-packed tale of a scholar at Arizona State University who raises his tuition money by selling beefcake posters of the boys on the ASU diving team. It's the true-life story of Todd Headlee, Platt's associate producer on the project. (Just as Platt has since gone on to distinguish himself at Orion, Headlee managed Milli Vanilli until he was fired last summer, reportedly because he failed to get the fraudulent performers onto *Playgirl* magazine's list of the sexiest male rock stars.)

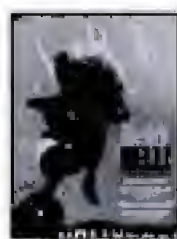
The jury is still out on how severely the ascension of Bernstein, who may be straying outside his area of expertise, and Platt, who definitely is, will affect Orion's fortunes. But last year's continual firings and easings-out of Orion executives have left those involved in recent Orion projects disgusted. They're furious—the word *imbeciles* tends to crop up in interviews with them—in no small part because the industry's common worker bees don't want to see yet another employer go under, leaving moviemaking further concentrated in the hands of a few huge corporations.

That's not to say that Orion will surely go under. The perennially suspect marketing and advertising departments have finally assumed a

studio the willies. Ovitz asked Costner if he would agree to become part of the CAA family if Ovitz could secure a deal for the actor's pet project. *Sure*, said Costner.

About the same time Ovitz and Costner were negotiating, Orion was in the first phase of its prolonged slump and no doubt flinching at the idea of losing Costner, who had made the hits *Bull Durham* and *No Way Out* for the studio, to someone with a fatter wallet. Suddenly Ovitz hovered into view. He promised Orion future considerations from CAA's roster of stars if Orion would agree to help finance Costner's big, long Indian movie. The studio agreed, perhaps recognizing that if it could get past *Dances* without calamitous results, its prospects might get decidedly sunnier. The deal was struck, CAA added another name to its client list, Costner got to direct, and *Dances* turned out to be a pleasant surprise.

Of course, the studio isn't even close to turning the corner—it would take four or five hits of *Dances With Wolves*'s magnitude to do that. But if by some miracle Orion makes it past the swirl of buyout rumors, recapitalizes and finishes 1991 intact, it will be remembered that just when Arthur Krim's friend and protector John Kluge tried to sell the company out from under him, just when Woody Allen picked the worst possible moment to try to skip out, Orion Pictures survived simply by doing Mike Ovitz a favor. ■



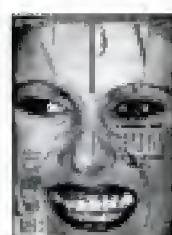
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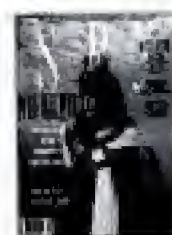
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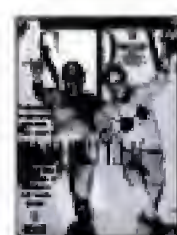
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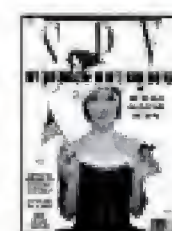
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Temporary Inanity

Excessive Alliteration, Self-revelation and Irritation

by Humphrey Greddon

"The superbly crafted suspense thriller that director Jonathan Demme has made from Thomas Harris's taut best-selling novel *The Silence of the Lambs* slams you like a sudden blast of bone-chilling, pulse-pounding terror." Certain masters in a field have such a distinctive style that they identify themselves with their every gesture. You know a piece is by Beethoven after hearing just one chord; you could guess that a work was Cézanne's by seeing a single brush stroke. Similarly, you must read only one sentence of a certain movie reviewer's to recognize his hand and think, Yes, it is a Travers. Science too tells us a single cell carries all the genetic information of a complex individual; the sentence quoted above, from one of Peter Travers's movie reviews for *Rolling Stone*, contains all the material necessary to generate Travers reviews indefinitely—the clichés ("superbly crafted," "taut," "bone-chilling," "pulse-pounding"), the hyperbole, the blurb-o-mania, the unsteady logic ("slams you like a sudden blast..."—why not "blasts you like a sudden slam"?).

And the use of alliteration at absolutely every opportunity. Elsewhere in the same review are "disfigurement and dismemberment," "terrifying instead of titillating," "best and boldest." Writing about *The Godfather Part III*, the critic really hit his stride: "violence but no vigor," "the business or the blood-letting," "royalty on the ropes," "fulminating about his fate," "turbulent and tender." *Kindergarten Cop*? "Energetic and enjoyable," "frisky fun," "drawing smiles and dodging schmaltz with dexterity." *Bonfire*? The novel was "penetrating, prophetic," and Tom Wolfe's "barbs drew blood" because

his characters were "recognizable and real," but Brian De Palma turns Wolfe's book into "flat-out farce."

Anyone unconvinced of Travers's blurb-o-mania is referred to his review of *Taxi Blues*: "[Russian rock star Piotr Mamonov] gives the kind of exuberantly unleashed performance that spells star in any language." Convention permits the studio marketing people to add exclamation points as they see fit.

Jim Harrison wrote about food for *Esquire* in March. Those who do not know who Harrison is should be embarrassed—he's so famous, he doesn't need an "About the Author" note. If you'd merely read the column, you'd know he's so famous, he went on a nine-stop book publicity tour that was grueling—really. You'd know that he once broke five bones in his face during practice on the "gridiron" and the coach said (pay attention, Travers fans), "Tough titty," and that he played the next day with an aluminum mask; that hard-living Don Henley is Jim Harrison's friend and that hard-drinking Willie Morris is



Illustration by Michael Witte

Jim Harrison's friend; that at Elaine's, Harrison had a veal chop (*Esquire's* new editor, Terry McDonnell, has also asked his old pals, seventies guys George Plimpton and Hunter Thompson, to write columns; if Dick Cavett had been at Elaine's the night McDonnell was hiring, he'd probably have a column in *Esquire*, too); that Harrison hunts ruffed grouse in Montana; that he ate a 20-course Japanese meal at Matsushita's private dining room in L.A.; that he stays at the Carlyle in New York; and that he has "rejected all offers to direct." Well, I hope anyone who'd never heard of Jim Harrison is suitably shamefaced. Imagine—never having heard of Jim Harrison!

Did you know that Terrence Rafferty, the movie critic for *The New Yorker*, can read? Rafferty spent two-thirds of his *Silence of the Lambs* review discussing the book on which it's based. In the same issue, he devoted two-thirds of the next review to a discussion of "the published text of Tom Stoppard's play 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.'" One discovered only much, *much* later that Stoppard had directed a bad movie of his play. Staying up late to watch the Oscars must have disappointed Rafferty, since his favorite prize doesn't even exist—they give an award for Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium, *not* for Best Another Medium on Which a Screenplay Was Based.

Ms. Udovitch, please! Reviewing a Julio Iglesias album for *Entertainment Weekly*, Mim Udovitch wrote, "In concert, Julio Iglesias has the kind of not-a-dry-seat-in-the-house appeal usually reserved for acts with younger fans." In *The Village Voice* she said the authors of two books about sitcoms with female leads "say 'breakthrough' so often I practically started bleeding, which would have been okay, since neither book amounts to much more than padding divided into chapters." Other recent Udovitchisms include "VULVA!" and "WIOU risks a fisting episode by mid-season."

A while back I had the troubling thought that Holly Brubach, who writes about fashion for *The New York-*

er, had lost her mind. The following paragraph provoked this worry (Brubach began by saying that at the Milan show for spring ready-to-wear, most of the talk was about the aliens who were reported to have landed in Voronezh in the Soviet Union):

Had the aliens landed in Milan that week instead, they might have gone home...with reports of having sighted Tina Turner at the Giorgio Armani show wearing an uncharacteristically loose-fitting khaki pants suit (by Armani) and uncharacteristically flat lace-up shoes;... or with descriptions of one of the week's most poignant moments, at Gianfranco Ferré, when the models, their Barbie-doll bodies the very standards by which so many earthling women measure their shortcomings, sashayed hurriedly down the runway in bathing suits cut high on the leg, nervously swishing towels behind their seats as they walked, as if they felt self-conscious about baring the backs of their thighs; or with an account of Versace's curtain call, heralded by an announcer—a gesture so preposterous that it begged for Ed McMahon to call out, "Heeeere's Gianni!"

Well, yes, if aliens had landed in Milan that week, they *might* have returned home with an account of Tina Turner's pants suit (by Armani) and lace-up shoes, but I still think they would have been unlikely to make an allusion to Ed McMahon.

Brubach's ratio of valuable, historically informed, well-expressed observations to insubstantial, fake-evocative, *New Yorker*-ish cultural musings is good; she does not write about her "friend, Lucie, an Englishwoman living in Paris," too often; she can describe clothes. In fact, she is perhaps the best fashion writer around. That is why she disappoints so much when she is irksome. Do I mind the precious vignettes—the overheard conversations and the street encounters—that interrupt her pieces every few paragraphs? Not too much. That she

admires Colette—perhaps the most irritating figure of the twentieth century? Not really. The chronic rut-rutting over the entanglement of fashion and exceptional female beauty—as if things had ever been otherwise? Not at all. No, what is hard to take is the brooding, the weariness, the unrelenting dismay. In part, Brubach's gloom is a necessary compensation for writing on a subject of such frivolity as *la*

mode for the One-Worlders at *The New Yorker*; but this does not excuse her fully. "Krizia, better than usual. Montana, good. Dolce & Gabbana, not so hot. So what?" she writes. She admires Franco Moschino for "trying to tell the fashion world that something's gone awry"—by provocatively embroidering EXPENSIVE JACKET on an expensive jacket, for example. Heavy. "In the current nostalgia for the sixties and seventies we can sense a hanging back from the brink of nuclear war, AIDS

and the earth's destruction," Brubach writes. That the sixties and seventies were a time of optimism and complacency with regard to nuclear war and the earth's survival will come as a surprise to many. Children's clothes are "pretty sad for what they say about the narcissistic ways adults use their children." No kidding! "Nor is the new vulgarity the sort of nouveau-riche exhibitionism that animated the eighties. Money, too, has lost its allure. Compared with the vulgarity of five years ago...the new vulgarity is hollow somehow." *Hollow vulgarity*—a source of melancholy that the poets had until now overlooked.

Brubach's heroine is Coco Chanel, who "lived among artists, intellectuals, and aristocrats....She was emotionally dishevelled, struggling to come to terms with bitter disappointment and persistent loneliness. She was without self-pity." Gianfranco Ferré, the Barbie-doll models, the aliens—what do they know of bitter disappointment and persistent loneliness? Probably nothing, the poor souls. ☞

Staying up late to watch the Oscars must have disappointed *The New Yorker's* Terrence Rafferty, since his favorite prize doesn't even exist



Dream-House Confidential

The Renovatin' Perelmans—
They're Ba-ack!

by Blake Bailey

In all probability, when the Charles R. Wilson Construction Company of Palm Beach was hired by billionaire Ronald Perelman to renovate his newly acquired, \$9 million amorphous one-story fortress overlooking the Atlantic, its proprietors were not aware of Perelman's dark history with building contractors. That is, when they agreed to perform a renovation in only two months (time was "of the essence," Perelman had stipulated) in exchange for \$989,433, they probably didn't imagine that a bewildering series of changes ordered, they allege, by Perelman would nearly double the cost to \$1.86 million, or that the time it would take to finish this transmogrification would be extended by almost eight months. And they probably wouldn't have believed that Perelman (the *Okay, time to dump Revlon for a few billion* Perelman) would refuse to make good on an alleged \$511,170 in unpaid bills, or that he'd end up suing Wilson—that's right, *Perelman sued Wilson*—complaining that Wilson had made "unauthorized requests for additional payment." But then, probably nobody at Wilson had read SPY's April 1989 account of Perelman's bullying, erratic behavior toward construction companies that worked on his Manhattan and Long Island homes ("Mr. and Mrs. Perelman Build Their Dream House," by Carl MacDonald). If anyone had, Wilson might have realized that the Perelmans are pathological renovators and serial deadbeats, and steered clear.

"We've been in Palm Beach for 53 years now, and this type of situation doesn't happen often," Jim Peeples, a somewhat mystified supervisor at Wilson, told SPY—meaning, presum-

ably, an obnoxious-plutocrat-trying-to-welsh-on-a-debt-and-bringing-a-specious-lawsuit type of situation. "We just try to make people happy."

Well, there are people, and then there are *megapeople* like Perelman and his glamorous wife, TV gossipouse Claudia Cohen, neither of whom reached their ethereal place in the world by settling for anything less than superfabulous. "The quality of work they demand has to be excellent," Peeples sighed. He searched for words. "They... *demand* it."

Peeples is not at liberty to go into detail, thanks to an out-of-court settlement that stipulated silence. (This vow of omertà may relate to Perelman's recently revved-up campaign to refurbish his image—one that may best be defined as that of sinister corporate raider and bullying skinflint.) Other observers, however, speaking on the condition of anonymity, were able to flesh out just what that demand for excellence meant. Cohen left an especially vivid impression.

"She would fly down for a catered

lunch at the place," said a subcontractor, "and while she was there she'd scream at workers to widen doors, knock out walls, change the floors. That woman is just a *monster*! We'd fix some tile around a door, and the next day we'd come back and find out she wanted the door widened a quarter of an inch. So we'd have to tear it all out and start over again."

"When I think of Claudia Cohen," said another craftsman, "the word *capricious* comes to mind. She just can't *visualize* things. She has to have it done first, and *then* she can decide she doesn't like it....Everybody would work fine until about an hour before Claudia arrived—then everyone just went into *paroxysms* of fear."

As with previous Perelman renovations, the affair ended up in court, the better to showcase Perelman's astounding piquery. He began by agreeing, "as a demonstration of good faith," to put \$491,868 into an escrow account until the matter was resolved. Never mind that this amount was \$19,302 less than what Wilson claimed was owed. As it turned out, Perelman's "good faith" amounted to holding Wilson's \$500,000 hostage to a few thousand that were in dispute. As Perelman's earlier experiences had shown, a small business in desperate need of cash just may be persuaded to cave in rather than be tied up in a lawsuit ad infinitum.

Wilson's lawyer, Michael Monchick, recalls the negotiations. "I told [Perelman's lawyers], 'Look, you've withheld \$500,000 from my client. You acknowledge that \$450,000 or so is owed, so why not just pay us that, and we can discuss the rest of it later?'" But Perelman, whose billionairehood wasn't attained through the sweetness of his nature, insisted on his day in court. For two months—while Wilson's unpaid subcontractors contended with their own bills—Perelman delayed, disdaining even to appear at an important deposition in West Palm Beach. When Monchick filed an order compelling Perelman to present himself (*himself*, not one of his ubiquitous flunkies), he responded via court documents that he could not be bothered with such trifles, because of

a "pre-existing business commitment in California." The response went on to assert, with an almost resonant hauteur, that "the case is in its infancy and there is no pressing need for the deposition on the date scheduled." Monchick fired back that Wilson's need for \$511,000 was most pressing indeed, and that Perelman's stalling was nothing less than an attempt to "drive [Wilson] out of business."

The court agreed with Monchick and ordered Perelman not only to pay Wilson's legal fees but also to appear in West Palm Beach for deposition

within the week. Faced with the distasteful prospect of having to explain an avalanche of neurotic change orders, Perelman allowed his attorneys to settle out of court. And for the record, Wilson claims to be happy with the settlement.

"Luckily," says Peeples, "we had docu-

mentation"—which must have proved that such unique features as a \$130,000 network of stereo, whirlpool and security-system wiring as well as a vast tonnage of air-conditioning units and swanky Crema Marfil stonework had indeed been ordered, installed and then perhaps re-ordered and reinstalled, and so on to blurry eternity. Somehow, it is all so fitting: the fearsome Perelmans, scourges of contractors, felled by that humblest of instruments, the initialed change order. Still, sequel lovers, fear not: some of the proceeds from the Revlon sale will no doubt go to fund the acquisition of new properties, which creates the possibility—nay, the necessity—of *home improvement*. ☺

"When I think of Claudia Cohen," said a worker, "the word capricious comes to mind. When Claudia arrived, everyone just went into paroxysms of fear"

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Making the Capital Safe for Democracy

The Walls Have Ears, and the Hedges Have Four-Inch, Razor-Sharp Thorns

by Susan Lehman

They might be terrorists. The pizza man, the tourists wandering past the cherry blossoms, the third graders visiting the FBI. Any one of these "innocent" people might be planning to drive a truck full of explosives through the White House gate. Or plotting to steal state secrets. That's why it's important to keep highly trained security agents on perpetual alert throughout the nation's capital.

Sharpshooters, magnetometered metal detectors and packs of bomb-sniffing dogs trotting through Capitol offices are a lot more noticeable since the war in the Persian Gulf. But even before our troops started launching Patriot missiles and deploying hydraulic bridge-building tanks, special forces, armed with a full cache of high-tech weaponry, stood ready to repel enemy advances at home.

Ask the Secret Service. Even in peacetime they've got hundreds of uniformed agents assigned to the White House around the clock. When they're not busy subduing fence jumpers, demolishing gate-crashing vehicles or scaring away planes that fly over White House airspace, these special agents spend time monitoring the infrared seismic sensors that ring 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, checking incoming pizzas and tubs of fried chicken for explosives and otherwise keeping a steady lookout for troublemakers. In their spare time, agents hit the road and interrogate schoolchildren like 17-year-old Tim Austin of Oakton, Virginia, who put the wrong answer on his English paper. (Addressing the essay question "If you had 24 hours to live, what would you do?," Tim, trying to outdo a friend's

offbeat response, had written that he would kill Dan Quayle.)

In the interest of keeping agents on their toes, in the early 1980s the U.S. government made plans to put up a \$1.6 million replica of the White House at the Secret Service's training center in Beltsville, Maryland. The pretend White House was never built, but student agents can still apprehend simu-terrorists on the streets of the fake Anytown, USA, that *was* built in Beltsville. Upholding the nation's security isn't all fun and games: consider the dedication of the Secret Service man who, jogging backward in order to keep an eye on ten-year-old Amy Carter while she played dodgeball during recess, tripped, twisted an ankle and had to be rushed to the hospital.

Security professionals must brave strange foodstuffs in strange places. After observing the tasters on the security team that accompanied Ronald Reagan to England after the Versailles summit in 1982, MP John Wheeler told an American reporter, "Very frankly, your president was surround-

ed by a bunch of gorillas."

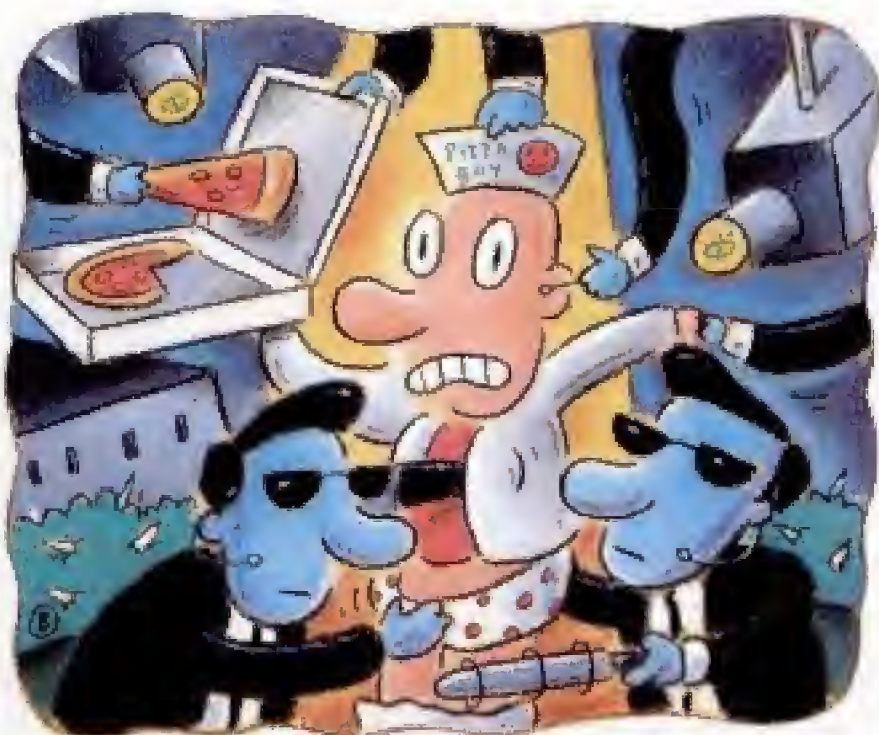
Official Washington extends beyond the president and his house. Heads of state, for example, must be protected from riffraff and dangerous curling irons. That's why guards had to X-ray the combs, blow-dryers and other equipment that hairdresser Robin Weir brought with him when he went to Blair House to do Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands's hair in 1982. And why guards with Uzis watched from a nearby balcony as Weir set and sculpted Indira Gandhi's hair in 1983. Before he was permitted to cut Nancy Reagan's hair, Weir was subjected to an extensive background check (employment-history review, credit check, questioning of dozens of references), as are the maids, the stenographers and the people who wash the president's boxer shorts. Curiously, the normally diligent security detail asked no questions when Weir showed up at the British embassy with a tackle box full of sharp scissors for a visit with Margaret Thatcher.

In Washington you can tell a lot about a person by looking at the size of his "protective detail." Look also at the speed with which that detail musters into action. Three or four Secret Service men rush into Duke Zeibert's restaurant two hours prior to a Cabinet member's visit to clear the place of any lurking security threats. When a mere ambassador comes to Duke's, however, only two or three guards are dispatched, and they come just minutes before the diplomat arrives. When former mayor Marion Barry used to sit at Duke's, two agents surveyed the scene about 15 minutes before he arrived (apparently no advance men cleared the way when Barry set out for a place other than Duke Zeibert's in quest of crack). And no one at all comes before William Donald Schaefer, the governor of Maryland, arrives.

Over at the Pentagon, security people have far graver concerns. An inside source remembers when Pentagon officials, stewing over the disappearance of office equipment, hired an outside security firm to inquire into the thefts. Investigators dusted Pentagon offices with a chemical powder

that revealed fingerprints when exposed to infrared light. The powder had a secondary attribute: it turned bright blue under infrared light when combined with semen. Though they did discover several sets of fingerprints, the security people were more impressed with the massive evidence of semen that turned up—under desks, beneath chairs, on sofas—throughout the Pentagon.

Today, Washington protects itself with more sophisticated systems than ever before. At certain plutonium facilities, the FBI and the Department of Energy use "Eyedentify" equipment to scan the patterns of blood vessels in the eyes of visitors, and allow only



people with prescanned eyeballs to enter restricted areas. Killer bushes with four-inch-long, razor-sharp thorns protect both the CIA and Marine Corps facilities in suburban Virginia. When these "trifoliate orange hedges" are fully grown, you'd need a bolt cutter or some powerful explosives to blast through them.



Are people following *you*? This is something you might want to think about—in a secure environment. Consider checking into the Madison Hotel's Presidential Suite. Although no U.S. president has ever stayed there, it rents for \$2,050 a night, has bulletproof windows and is safely remote from the hotel's elevators and other guests. Of course, someone a mile away might be watching you through the bulletproof window with a powerful magnifying lens, so maybe you'd rather pay \$2,500 for the Royal Suite, with its one-way windows. Paranoia, at least in Washington, is good for business. 

Illustration by Gary Baseman

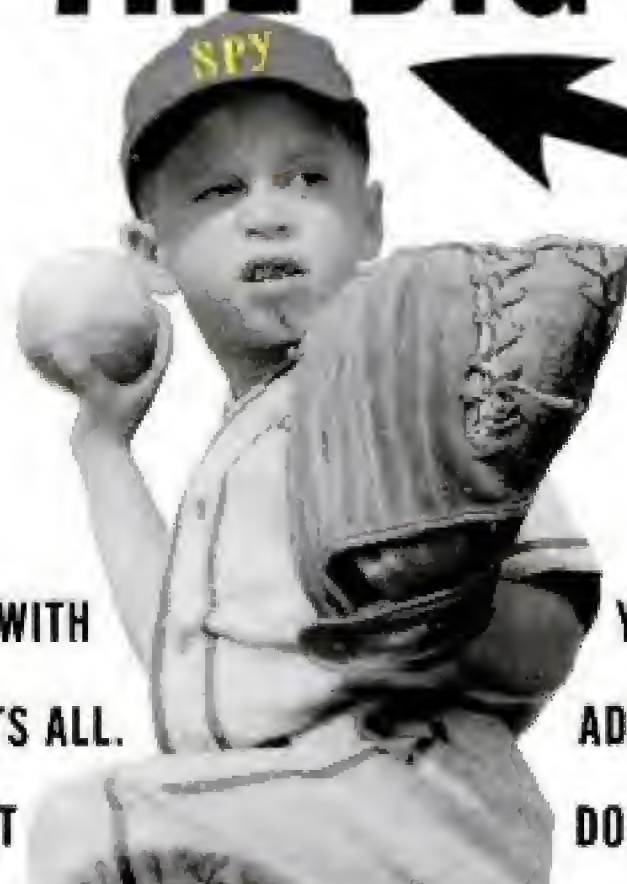


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Who's Laughing Now?

Someone Must Still Think Art

**Buchwald Is Hilarious. Hands,
Please. Anyone. Anyone?**



by Tom McNichol

When we sprang upon him at the National Press Club, the retired Pentagon computer analyst was contentedly awaiting lunch and the day's festivities—namely, the presentation of a humor award to the syndicated columnist Art Buchwald. Hence his discomfort when we asked whether he personally thought Buchwald was funny. "Do I think Art Buchwald is funny?" he repeated. The analyst pondered the question. "Well, you can't live in Washington for 20 years and not be exposed to him," he offered at last.

Apart from those who write the blurbs for Buchwald's all-too-frequent anthologies ("One of today's master satirists," says an anonymous copywriter. "An old pro at jokes and gags," says *The Washington Post*), finding people who actually consider Buchwald's twice-weekly column *funny* is a task that would challenge even Professor Heinrich Applebaum, the unfunny character Buchwald dusts off every time he needs a setup line. In fact, H. J. Cummings, an Applebaumesque figure whose Workshop Library on World Humour was honoring Buchwald, illustrated that very point with a discussion of the satirist's circa-1989 tour of the Soviet Union.

"They interpreted him differently there," Cummings offered. "The Soviets take a lot of what he writes as being serious." Perhaps by *serious* Cummings meant *not funny*. But before the point could be clarified, the Old Pro at Jokes and Gags himself entered the room, took the podium and noted the tight security he'd seen in an adjoining room for visiting South African president F. W. De Klerk. "I thought all of that security was for me!" he quipped.

The comment drew hearty laughs from the crowd, but then this was Washington, and almost anything delivered in a lisping voice that sounds like Buddy Hackett doing Elmer Fudd is bound to get a laugh. And make no mistake—Art Buchwald is a funny guy in person. It is in print, in *The Washington Post* and the other 529 newspapers that carry his column, that the Old Pro has long since gone gimpy.

Granted, there was a time when Buchwald's column was funny; there was also a time when Morey Amsterdam guested on *The Tonight Show*. But today, to the long-suffering millions who have to pass his column on their way to the comics, he has become the Incredible Shrinking Satirist.

"In Washington, people usually turn to the Op-Ed pieces before they read Buchwald, if [they read him] at all," says Norman Ornstein, the ubiquitous pundit. "I think Buchwald's probably more widely read outside the Beltway than he is here."

"I think Buchwald is more popular

inside the Beltway," maintains Roy Bode, editor of the *Dallas Times Herald*. Two years ago the *Times Herald* decided to stop running Buchwald's column, although editors fretted over whether the move would set off reader protest. In the event, the decision inspired not a single call or letter. By way of comparison, Bode says, the paper "dropped *Zippy the Pinhead* about the same time and got so many letters, we had to bring it back."

The essence of Buchwald's work is difficult to put into words, even for the editors who run his column. "His writing has a lot of quotes," offers Gerry Hertzler, city editor of *The Goshen News*, an Indiana newspaper that carries Buchwald. "Sometimes his humor is ironic, and people don't get it all the time."

This theory—that Art Buchwald is funny, it's just that most people don't get his humor because he's so subtle—would go a long way toward explaining his longevity in the face of such a tepid popular response to his work. It would mean, however, that people in the sixties were smarter than people today, since Buchwald's formula has not changed since then. One essential ingredient is the character with the funny name—Heinrich Applebaum, of the Institute for Political Spectrums; Heinrich Applebaum, head of Heinrich Applebaum's Made-to-Order Quality Predictions; Professor Heinrich Applebaum, expert on "half-fare phobia"; Comrade Glushkov, chairman of the State Pricing Commission; and Mr. Sam Reverberation, an acoustics expert. Of course, anyone can make up a funny name; it takes a Master Satirist to know the difference between an appropriate name (like, say, Heinrich Applebaum) and an inappropriate one (such as "Abraham Lincoln Roosevelt, a Negro student," a character Buchwald created in the early 1960s but has since retired).

Once the characters are established, the Buchwald recipe calls for the mixture to be stirred until a dialogue bubbles to the surface. After more than 40 years of fabricating such conversations, Buchwald has acquired the ability to slip in and out of dialects

with startling ease. Here's Buchwald as Federov, a KGB spy who is defending the veracity of his reports: "Is confusing, comrades, I confess. But is not my fault. I only report the truth." Now, here's the very same Buchwald reporting how a Japanese newspaperman apologized to him: "'Ah so,' he said. 'A thousand pardons.'"

With the proper ingredients in place, the Buchwald recipe is goof-proof; it even provides leftovers. During Kennedy's presidency, Buchwald wrote a column about a society that supported JFK's press secretary, pudgy Pierre Salinger: "The object of the society is to discourage physical fitness in all its forms. Our motto is 'Better Fed Than Red.'" Just last May, Buchwald had Mikhail Gorbachev say to George Bush, "'We have a new saying in the Soviet Union: 'Better Fed Than Red.''" A Buchwald joke, like a diamond, is forever.

Once a year, Buchwald implicitly acknowledges that he has run out of ideas by reprinting the Thanksgiving column he first published in 1952. The column, which purports to explain Thanksgiving to the French in a humorous manner, has grown so tiresome, by the way, that *Post* Style-section editor Mary Hadar has for the last four years tried to persuade him not to run it. That she hasn't attempted to do the same with the hundred other, equally weary columns Buchwald produces each year should be taken as a measure of the depth of Hadar's affection for her old friend.

Even if Buchwald's column were retired, he would still make a good living from speaking engagements. And then there are the awards ceremonies, such as the World Humour Award banquet—free food, free laughs, free applause and an attractive parchment scroll to take home, which he accepted with due humility. "One has mixed feelings about being given an award for humor," Buchwald said in acceptance. "On the one hand, you're flattered. On the other hand, if someone gives you a prize for making fun of them, you can't be doing a very good job."

Heinrich Applebaum couldn't have said it better. ☺

UN-BRITISH CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

10. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* does not mention any singular of *suds*, but surely a sud is one soap bubble.

23. "In favor of" is *for*, plus *tuna* and *et* (which is *and* in Latin) backward.

26. *Deal in E* rearranged ("odd"). Reference to the song "Sweet Adeline," a traditional favorite of people in their cups.

27. *All plus emit* ("put out") backward.

28. In the early days of Desert Storm, syndicated columnist William Raspberry, a man, explained why he was backing the war effort: "An analogy comes to mind. You can warn your daughter to take every precaution against pregnancy. You can do what you can to help her understand the long-term implications of childbearing. But once the baby is born, warning against pregnancy makes no sense." On the same day on the same page in *New York Newsday*, Mary McGroarty observed in her column, "Men, primarily, take the position that since the war...has started, nothing can be done or should be done to try to stop it. Women often feel otherwise." McGroarty cited a Texas woman whose son was killed in Vietnam by friendly fire and who traveled 37 hours by bus to Washington to protest the new war: "She thinks that demonstrations may do more for the participants than for presidents. 'It's a way of venting anger,' she says." It seems to me that few Americans without a male chromosome would draw a dispassionate analogy between childbearing and mounting a massive assault, and that few Americans with a male chromosome would characterize their own political action as essentially emotional. Much domestic warfare arises from this gender difference—as well as from men's daring to vent opinions about gender differences. Let me say quickly that the political actions of many men probably are essentially emotional and I am trying to stake out a middle ground here and it goes without saying that I am full of shit. Okay?

29. *M* for *Monsieur*, plus *a.m.*, followed by *animal* "wild." The key distinction of the mammalian class is that its members feed their young with mammary milk. *Mammary* and *mammal* actually derive from *mama*, which is baby talk for *mother*

even in Latin—you could look it up. (Men, then, are underdeveloped mammals; hairy-chestedness may well be an attempt to gloss over this shortcoming. And men's orgasms, we all know, are not as long as women's. What I am doing is frantically trying to make up for any sexist impression I may have given in referring to female emotionality above, okay? But of course I am just making things worse, as men will, pigs that we are. Okay: Have you seen Jonathan Demme's *Silence of the Lambs*? It is the first violence-against-women movie I've seen that resolutely avoids appealing to male prurience. Jodie Foster is brave and able and also extremely beautiful, and to my recollection we never see any of her skin except her face and hands. And generally in movies the nude female corpses are starlet-shapely, but in this one they come across as the deeply unthrilling remains of real women. What we need from Demme now is a war movie.)

DOWN

1, 23. *Sand* around *harps* plus *flat* for savorless and *S* for *salt*. Notes that are neither sharpened nor flattened are *natural* notes.

5. You can find *desist* in what's after *in*.

22. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is one of a number of American sports idols who have adopted the Muslim faith. I didn't put him or Ali (see below) into this puzzle on purpose; they just fit in. Kismet.

25. Muhammad *Ali* plus *bi*. The first Desert Storm-spawned joke I heard was "What do you call an Arab with a ham on his head? Hammed. What do you call an Arab with two hams on his head? Mohammed. What do you call an Arab with two hams on his head and a vibrator in his butt? Sheik Mohammed." This is one of the stupidest jokes I have ever heard. I am putting it way down at the bottom here in the hope that no one will read it. ☹

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Un-British Crossword

Decoding the Desert Storm Dialogue

Sticks and Stones May Break, but

Patriots Will Never Hurt Us?

by Roy Blount Jr.

It doesn't help that our commander in chief is George Bush, whose personal reactions to the tactics of Saddam Hussein ("Kinda sick," for instance) have been reminiscent of Michael Dukakis's reactions to the tactics of the Bush campaign. Or that *linkage* seemed to be a dirtier word for our side than *kill*. But, at any rate, morale is the key element in a war, and war lowers mine.

From the beginning of the War in the Gulf, my position on it was clear: *If it works, I'm not against it. If it doesn't, I didn't think it would.* I realize these were not stirring affirmations. They put off many hitherto anti-war people I talked to who'd caught

Desert Storm fever. Some of the reasons for their enthusiasm: (a) a general dread, nearly as great as the president's, of concentrating on the domestic can of worms; (b) the absence of a military draft; (c) moral fatigue; (d) the feeling that no one can be expected to resist more than one full-scale national mobilization in a lifetime; (e) hatred for Israel's enemies, coupled with a need for genuinely detestable enemies of our own; (f) baby-boomers' discovery of something fresh or pleasingly retro in the notion that American troops are not personally the enemy.

The only one of these I have trouble with is the last one. Although I was in the Army myself, and the only people in the Army whom I found very congenial were those who, like me, were eager to get out of it, I don't see how there could ever have been any doubt, even during Vietnam, that the nation needs soldiers and should root for them to survive (if not necessarily to turn out heavily at the polls). And hey, these new generals we have

are a lot more likable (comfortably fat, for one thing, like Mrs. Bush) than Westmoreland.

Still, bomb runs and yellow ribbons don't make me feel patriotic. What does, aside from returning to this country from any other one, is inventive American English. "Generals always speak generally," General Schwarzkopf said on TV, and I was proud to think that after all these years, an *American* general finally came out with that. "Intermitting the bad guys" is how a tank commander described his mission one night on the news: American irony had gone to war.

"Why won't you call a spade a spade?" Saddam Hussein (in translation) asked Peter Arnett. He was hurt that his enemies kept calling his missiles Scuds when he called them Al-Husseins, after his grandfather.

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but NATO calls various Soviet helicopters Hinds, Hips, Hooks, Halos, Helixes, Havocs, Hokums and Hormones. American-named American helicopters are Cobras, Apaches,



Knights, Super Sea Stallions, Black-hawks and Chinooks. Whether a Chinook can beat a Hormone I don't know, but it sounds like it ought to be able to. I do know we have some nerve naming weapons after people we took this country away from. (I believe the Super Sea Stallions once peacefully farmed Atlantic City.)

It's amazing to watch how slowly our Tomahawk missiles move through the air poking about for targets. If I were naming an American cruise missile, I'd call it the Waverly, after this Eudora Welty dialogue: "All poisonous snakes you can tell 'em because they crawls waverly, son. If a snake ain't coming with the idea to kill you, he crawls straight." Of course, our missiles officially exempt what we call innocent civilians, so maybe we should call one the Guiltseeker.

Next thing you know, I'll be trying my hand at the ancient tradition of *hija'*, or diatribe poetry, which was reportedly revived during the war—Saudi poets cast attacks on Saddam like (in translation) this:

Your face is darkest
black,
And we will yet set
fire
To your bottom and
your back.

And Iraqis answered with "Your

braves have all been killed, O rue./ Even the rooster laughs at you." In the past, reportedly, this mode of blowing off hokum and hormone actually averted warfare sometimes. Maybe Democratic congressman Harry A. Johnston of Florida knew what he was talking about when he said, "This may sound racist, but these guys are twice removed from camels. They don't know how to fight a war." What if we'd used our ghetto-hardened rap groups in the Gulf before committing our divisions?

Saddam, you think you're bad? You would

Last about a week in our neighborhood.

We do, after all, have some nerve.

ACROSS

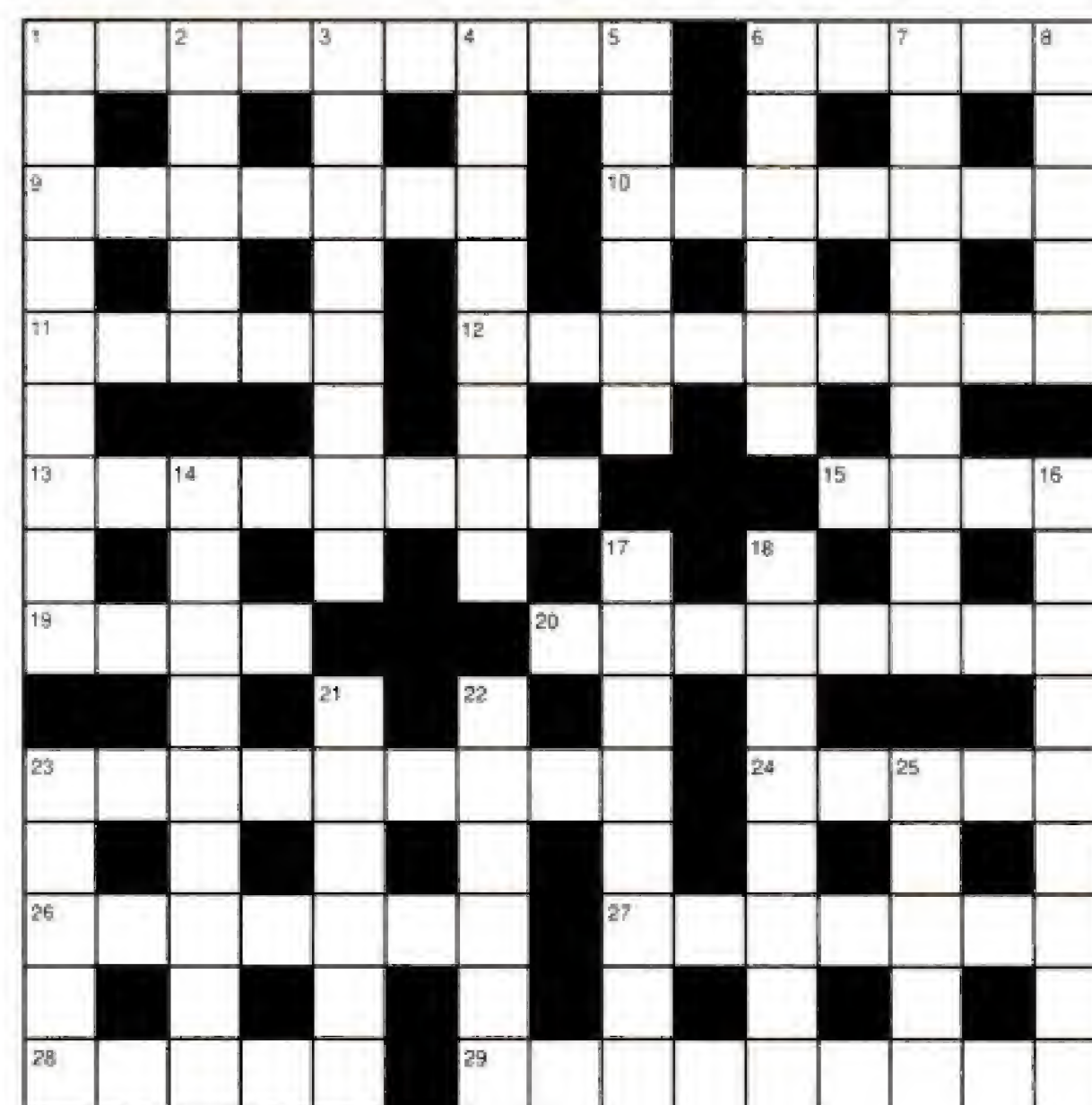
- 1, 6. Squelch as well as dilute cocktail. (6,3,5)
9. Simian presents garbled plea to Eisenhower. (7)
10. With sweetening added, single soap bubble gets around crazy rage. (7)
11. Board proposal put before Kafka hero. (5)
12. Not one to indulge, Reba backs up to get around blot. (9)
13. Stressed a cold, decent arrangement. (8)

15. Soft, thick, wormlike larva back in town. (4)
19. Not cutting, boring. (4)
20. Car and spouse eliminate human element. (8)
23. In favor of fish and Latin coming back, Lucky? (9)
24. Once more, a profit. (5)
26. Odd deal: in East, drunks sing sweet to her. (7)
27. Everything put out back for eternity. (3,4)
28. Milksop Staten Island shortstop has male chromosome. (5)

29. Wild animal follows Monsieur before morning breast-feeding. (9)

DOWN

1. With 23, unnatural notes of angels' instruments surrounded by grit and savorless salt. (6,3,5)
2. I got out of Peoria somehow to compose high musical drama. (5)
3. Fashionable boy dolls are lily-livers. (8)
4. Eva got up, waxed wroth and leveled out. (8)
5. Stop! In



- between the sides is temperance. (6)
6. Hairpiece on kidder folded mild magazine. (6)
7. Between old O'Hara place and city of angels, crazy nut creates awful hairy eight-legged thing. (9)
8. Up-and-down warning system. (5)

14. Hundred-zip, 50-zip, right? Not so much? Like 19? (9)
16. Environmentalist head is a vegetable. (5,4)
17. Not so hot to put Gospel before armed conflict, meathead! (8)
18. From "Join me at the Copa, please" to "Make a deal with the prosecution."

- (3,1,4)
21. Up, up! Fry one scrambled, and take out the trash! (7)
22. Make East right somehow for former center of L.A. (6)
23. (See 1 Down.)
25. Excuse the Greatest, going both ways. (5)

Answers appear on page 83.

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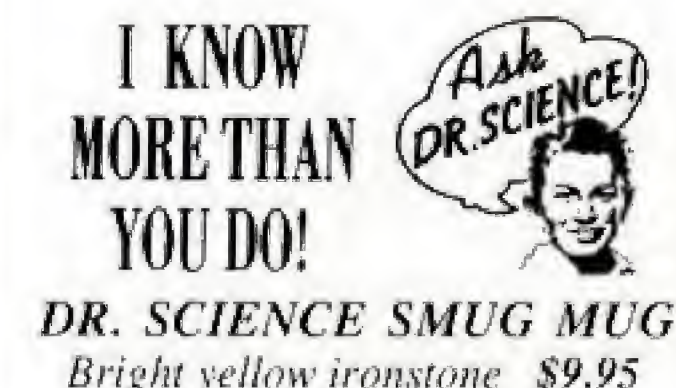


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Oval Office Diary

Notes Toward a Nonfiction Novel

TRANSCRIPTION OF GHWB DICTAPHONE RECORDING 021-0391

Can't believe that. Named him after some press guy? Chris Hedges Dhubia? And what's wrong with George Herbert Walker Dhubia? Who's the liberator here? Gotta be some way--gonna check all the Kuwaiti baby names this whole year. Ah--Dear Dictaphone. Dear Dictaphone, you tell me what the heck would've been the point of planning something and then wim--then you-know-what-ing out. You put on the whites, you're not gonna play a few sets? Well, I built my pit, and sooner or later the horseshoes had to fly--and bounce. And Mr. Saddam Hussein knew that. And now look at how it all outcame: Won the darn war.

Saddam--history. Kuwait--free, ours again. Certain someone's approval rating--looking fantastic. Domestic agenda blah-blah criticism--Back Burner City. This war was good to--to the American people. And there's the down side, I know. Feeling sadness about the loss of American lives--this tragic loss. These people that I ate turkey with . . . so it's a--really a personal-loss thing. And feel bad about Quayle, about the Powell's-rising-star business in the press. Brave of him to speak to families of soldiers like that, with them all knowing about his service mix-up.

Kicked his ass? You bet. Saddam, not Quayle. Warned him, but did he listen? No--bunch of phony proposals. Gave me a chance to say "cruel hoax," though. (Gotta remember--thank the guy that came up with that--more I thought about it, sounded better than "awful, awful Iraqi statement," that I had. Conciser.) But that crazy language that they always used for their official--you know, "O glorious faithful Muslims"--gonna miss that. That language that he used in the speeches. Maybe I should try it. How does this . . . [clears throat]:

"O brave Americans, O Mr. Speaker, O noble Congress members and glorious Senators, O true-hearted Cabinet--uh--pals, O free and honest . . . folks at home, O Bar . . . this vile, savage, awful, evil, nasty, awful aggression that has been--been launched out against--been unpleasantly launched out--against peace-loving, oil-rich Kuwait is . . . has now most wondrously been prevailed upon against to end. The proud and brave and faithful warriors, many of them from poor neighborhoods and underadvantaged minority groupings, have taken a stand in the sand and the sea and the air"--proud, clear air? Proud sky? Heavens? No, maybe not heavens--"and have pounded and slammed and . . . and . . . really slammed Saddam and have triumphantly . . . uh . . . restored democratic values"--or something like that--"to the freedom"--oh, make it -loving, we'll figure it out later--uh--"people of Kuwait. The threat is ended, we won, darn what anybody says about how long we're gonna have to stay, what happens next, airline explosions, that junk. We won. It was turn-tail-and-run mode. Vanishing-cloud-of-sand time. O exalted voters, Oh, gosh. . . ." Hey, kinda like it once you get the feel. Gonna shoot that past Ailes and Rogich, see if they run up the flagpole. Bet they do.

More private note here, that things with Bar have--have been really, uh, good. Things. You know. Can't really figure it--hate to introspectate, anyway. But, yeah, from mid-January. But even so, if I don't hang up my windbreakers pronto, then I won't be complying with her terms. Gonna arrange 'em by color, like I promised. The windbreakers.

GHWB: gk
March 1991



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